

# Ivybridge u3a learn, laugh, live

## NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2024



### TURNCHAPEL

One of the guided walks held by Local History Group 1

Registered Charity Number 1178944

## CONTACT DETAILS

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Chairman                    07977 905458  
Membership Secretary                    07780 150750



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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Hon. President.	Cliff Bennett
Chairman	Vanessa Day
Treasurer	Christine Smith
Business Secretary	Averil Heaton
Membership & Beacon Manager	Ritsaert von Oven
Website Manager & E-mail Monitor	Paul Jones
Speaker Co-ordinator & Dep. Chair	Graham Meaden
Group Co-ordinator	John Bowditch
Publicity/PR Co-ordinator	Roy Little
Newsletter Editor	Guy Yea

## CHAIRPERSON NEWS

I hope you have all enjoyed this unusual summer weather, deluge one moment, heat wave the next. Thankfully the weather was great for our boat trip to Calstock, which was enjoyed by all.

The committee are already working on events for the autumn months, including the Christmas party and there are other promotional events which we have been asked to participate in.

The Third Age Trust is planning to change the way decisions are made at a national level. There will be a small Board which will focus on compliance, finances, strategy and a u3a Council, with representatives from each region, which will deal with those issues of collective interest to all u3as.

The committee has had an opportunity to follow discussions leading to this proposal and have supported it. The operation of our u3a remains unchanged. For further information on this subject please ask a member of the Committee.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

<b>16th September</b>	The experience of developing Concorde over 10 years at Bristol	<b>Chris Coote</b>
<b>21st October</b>	Papua New Guinea: tribes ,cultures and birds of paradise	<b>Ian Gasper</b>
<b>18th November</b>	Jazz Pianist, a further look at the development of Jazz music over time	<b>Roger Browne</b>
<b>16th December</b>	<b>Christmas Party</b>	

## CURRENT GROUPS

### **ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS**

Led by Peter Brooks  
Contact 01752 880891

### **ART FOR FUN**

Led by Carolyn Whalley  
Contact 07795 198477

### **BOOK GROUPS**

**Group 1** Led by 'B' Naylor  
Contact 01752 417315

**Group 2** Led by Lynn Green  
Contact 07979 857317

### **Crime, Murder, Mystery**

Led by Val Carmichael  
Contact 01752 658164

### **BRIDGE**

Led by Roger Davey  
Contact 01752 894703

### **CANASTA**

Led by John Davis  
Contact 01752 690962

### **CHAIR YOGA**

Led by Silvia Rutley & Glo Horton  
Contact Silvia 07796 151141  
Glo 07947 061625

### **CREATIVE WRITING**

Led by Jill McRae-Spencer  
Contact 01752 271044

### **CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS**

Led by Ian McClure  
Contact 01548 830578

### **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

Led by Michael Bailey  
Contact 01752 892777

### **DARTMOOR DISCOVERY WALKING.**

### **DARTMOOR HISTORY WALKING**

Led by Stephen Woodcock  
Contact 01752 691305 or  
07739122374

### **DAY TRIPS**

Led by Rhoda Lloyd  
Contact 07443 390043

### **DRAMA**

Led by Ann Laity  
Contact 01752 691648

### **ETYMOLOGY**

**Group 1** Led by 'B' Naylor  
Contact 01752 417315

**Group 2** Led by Jean Sherrell  
Contact 01752 691750

### **FILM CLUB**

Led by Bill McKimm  
Contact 01364 388175

### **FOLK CLUB**

Led by Jan Niezgoda  
Contact 01752 896214

### **FRENCH IMPROVERS**

Led by Jill Sampson  
Contact 01752 691033

### **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Led by Brian Sabel  
Contact 01364 649206

### **GEOLOGY**

Led by Victor Abbott  
Contact 07757 262919

### **GERMAN CONVERSATION**

Led by Gudrun Kitidis  
Contact 01752 658735

## GROUPS cont.

### **GUITAR GROUP**

Led by Guy Yea  
Contact 01752 895590

### **HISTORY OF MODERN BRITAIN**

Led by Michael & Maggy  
Swinson  
Contact 01752 698041

### **LITTER PICKING**

Led by Victor Abbot  
Contact 07757262919

### **LOCAL HISTORY**

**Group 1** Led by Barbara Yea  
Contact Barbara on 01752 895590

**Group 2** Led by Derek Phillips &  
Di Gibbs

Contact Derek 01752 896784  
Contact Di 01752 893989

### **MUSIC APPRECIATION**

Led by Mike Swinson &  
Cliff Bennett  
Contact Mike on 01752 698041 or  
Cliff on 01752 894978

### **NATURAL HISTORY**

Led by Celia Ralph & Trudi Bell.  
Contact Celia on 01752 892555 or  
Trudi by trudij25@outlook.com

### **NEEDLECRAFT (CRAFT)**

Led by Keith Mason & Kate Danby  
Contact Keith 07779289462 or  
Kate 01752 839105

### **PLAY READING**

Led by Michael Fraser  
Contact 01752 830430

### **POETRY APPRECIATION**

Led by Ann Oakins  
Contact 01548 830550

### **QUIZ**

Led by Bill McKimm  
Contact 01364 388175

### **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

Led by Victor Abbott  
Contact 07757 262919

### **SCRABBLE FOR FUN**

Led by Rosemary Cole  
Contact 01752 898643

### **SINGING FOR PLEASURE**

Led by Rhoda Lloyd  
Contact 07443 390043

### **SPOON CARVING**

Led by Adam Hart-Davis  
Contact 07901554143

### **THEOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY & PSYCHOLOGY (TPP)**

Led by Averil Heaton  
Contact 01752 897109

### **GROWING OLD IN MIND AND BODY**

Led by Brian Sabel  
Contact 01364 649206

### **UKELELE**

Led by Joy Horwell  
Contact 01752 893402

### **WINE APPRECIATION**

#### **Group 1**

Led by Ritsaert von Oven  
Contact 07780150750

## RECENT EVENTS

The talk at the **March** meeting was given by Elizabeth Ducie who, prior to becoming a full time author in 2012, spent 30 years within the pharmaceutical industry.

Having run facilities for GlaxoWellcome Manufacturing Company here in the UK, she became their International Pharmaceutical Consultant working with emerging countries setting up their own pharmaceutical manufacturing industries. Her role was to help both the companies and their governments set up and interpret current pharmaceutical regulations and quality control mechanisms. This work took her to over 50 countries including Russia, Africa, South America and Europe, both on her own and as part of a team, and eventually led to four of her novels.

Elizabeth's talk skilfully wove her experiences as a woman working in this largely male dominated field into brief summaries of each novel's plot, their key themes and the inspiration for some of her characters in the people she met. The themes include the counterfeit and illicit drug trades and the deception sometimes surrounding the efficacy of newer drugs, all of which are relevant today due to the Internet.

**April's** talk was given by Martin Lloyd, an author and former Civil Servant who had spent 24 years in the Immigration Service. His talk was entitled Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies and consisted of three stories which illustrated the part a passport played in each.

English passports in the 19th Century were impressive documents rather than the small booklet of today, but they were not easily obtained. An applicant had to be known personally by the Foreign Secretary and cost £2.7s.6d. They were not required in order to leave/ enter England for less than one day, but other European Countries had other rules e.g. a French pass could be used instead. Crucially, no documents carried a photograph or any other personal identification of the bearer. They were therefore open to abuse.

The three stories told occurred in 1858, 1914 and 1945 respectively

## RECENT EVENTS

issued and used in all countries, leading to the procedures we have today.

In 1858 Count Felici Orsini obtained a fake passport in the bona fide name of English barrister Thomas Allsop to carry out his plot to assassinate Napoleon III and his wife Eugenie in Paris. The plot was foiled, France and Belgium withdrew their concessions for English people to travel without permission and Palmerston proposed a new Conspiracy to Murder Bill which was rejected by Parliament and resulted in the downfall of his Government.

In 1914, when Germany declared war on Russia, all American tourists in Europe had to return to the USA. Charles English's passport, in for renewal, went missing. In fact it was given to Charles Hans Lody in the American Embassy who was eventually arrested as a German Agent, tried for treason and executed at the Tower of London (the first execution there for 200 years). England and America then demanded that all passports carried a photograph of the bearer.

The final story concerned Lord William Joyce, who had obtained a British passport by claiming British citizenship via his Irish parents, before eventually going to Germany prior to US entering the war. His voice was recognised by a police officer who was able to be a witness under the Treason Act of 1945 which required the prosecution to prove a covert act of treason. He was found guilty of betrayed allegiance to the UK and misusing his British passport.

So, the three major facts emerged from these tales.

Everyone needs a passport to come and go from this country, photographic identification is mandatory, and you misuse your passport at

## RECENT EVENTS

Our **May** talk was by Billy 'Scratch' Hitchin and was an account of his 56 years of life at sea. Billy grew up in the Salcombe valley on a houseboat and ran away to sea aged 14 rather than go back to school and face more struggles with his dyslexia.

He had always been at one with the sea, rowing to school, developing a knowledge of winds and tides and other skills of seamanship. This particular day he saw a steam yacht anchored in the estuary and asked the Captain for a job; he left at midnight leaving a brief note for his mother. He was gone for a year, during which time he learnt more practical sailing skills.

His talk outlined his subsequent career on cargo ships, in the Merchant Navy, on Union Castle cruise ships, including the Queen Mary and the Blue Star line to Canada. He described his experience as drilling crew on oil rigs, laying pipelines in the jungles of West Africa, and as a crane operator in South Africa. In 1973 he bought a fishing boat to catch shellfish, in the meantime having met his wife, and had a brief sojourn making commercials for TV.

In 1992 he bought a 33ft boat and fished locally on a daily basis exporting crab to Asia and supplying restaurants in the Midlands.

Eventually he retired, bought and restored a houseboat he remembered from his childhood and now sails for pleasure, writing about his life and becoming a best selling author. A varied, exciting life

The talk at the **June** meeting, after the AGM, was Listening to the Enemy, the story of a radio operator in WW2 given by Mike Griffiths.

Mike's father, Harry, was an amateur radio operator who worked for the GPO in Liverpool, and was very skilled in Morse Code, which he had learnt in the Boy Scouts. He could send at 30+ words/minute and read much faster. Like many such amateurs he was drafted in 1938 as a radio operator to help with the war effort in the Radio Security Service and sent to St Erth in Cornwall, one of six 'listening outposts' throughout the country which were the 'Ears' of MI6 at Bletchley



## RECENT EVENTS

While it was supposed to be top secret, being a Cornish village, everyone knew what was going on (i.e. listening to Jerry) but all played the game. Being an able bodied man seemingly not helping in the war effort worried the authorities and in 1943 Harry joined the Royal Signals.

Harry recorded his work in his 'Code Book', which Mike still has, detailing German and Italian radio nets, German brevity codes and double agent call signs. Harry was able to distinguish which agent was calling by their 'touch' so he knew not only who was calling who but where from. This information was passed to Bletchley Park and played into all their computer development, code breaking activities and techniques such as Alan Turing's Traffic Analysis system, used more recently to capture Osama Bin Laden. St Erth closed in 1964 when its work was transferred to GCHQ Bude and where activities are ongoing, supplying information for GCHQ, and the National Cyber Centre in Victoria

After the war Harry returned to the GPO, installing telephones in west Cornwall, but MI6 had not finished with him as his Morse skills were still very much in demand. He was asked to work at RAF Pendennis as the Cold War gathered pace and in 1957 moved to 19 Group Coastal Command at RAF Mount Batten where he worked with RAF Shackleton shadowing Russian spy trawlers in Western Approaches. He took up his ham radio hobby again, founded Saltash Amateur Radio Club and continued to teach Morse. He became very popular with Iron Country Radio hams and his meticulous Radio Log Book was frequently scrutinised by Naval Intelligence.

Mike finished his talk with a whirlwind discussion of the dizzying number of notorious and famous spies and double agents known to Bletchley Park and GCHQ, both during the war and after, several of whose call signs were known to Harry and are recorded in his Code or Radio Log Books.

## RECENT EVENTS

### WALKS ON THE 1914-18 BATTLEFIELDS

Tony Rea's carefully illustrated talk at our meeting in **July** gave us the opportunity of walking "In Step with The Devons" (the infantry regiment raised in the West Country in 1685), making us intensely aware of the privations and hardship they suffered on the battlefields of WW1 and appreciating their acts of heroism. Tony is the author of a number of books written about the period 1914-18: this talk was based on the research he was undertaking for another, soon to be published. In addition to his extensive archival research, his experience – and ours – was obviously enhanced by the visits he personally had made to many of the sites involved.

Initially the Devons had just two battalions, each of 800 men. By 1918 the two had grown to 16 and by the time they were amalgamated with the Dorset Regiment in 1958 they had fought in many of the battles that are now household names. They had been present in Burma, on the Somme and on D-Day. So much injury had been sustained at Salamanca by one battalion that they were given the nickname "the bloody 11th".

There was mystery surrounding some who had enlisted. Horace Blackhouse, a Mason, whose 100th anniversary had only recently been celebrated, had been the owner of the public house in Ermington when it had been the opposite side of the road from the present one. For some unknown reason he had not enlisted in his local regiment as was normally the case, but in The King's Own. The name of another man - William Dillon - appeared on the war memorial in Modbury, although he was found to have no official connection with the locality.

Poignantly, Tony showed a photograph of the graves of those in the Regiment who were killed on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, which is now a beautifully-tended Commonwealth War Grave. This cemetery, unusually, is in the form of a long, thin, strip: the bodies of the soldiers had been buried together in what had been their trench on the Western Front. The legend at the site reads "The Devonshires held this trench: the Devonshires hold it still".

## GROUP NEWS



**IVYBRIDGE SUMMER  
FESTIVAL,  
Victoria Park on the 25th  
May.**

The u3a Folk Club, Ukelele Group and Guitar Group were invited to participate . Other members came along to support us and enjoying the event.

Photos show members of the Folk Club, the Guitar



## GROUP NEWS



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### Science & Technology Group

Last November Barbara Brighthouse (Company Secretary of CED - Christian Engineers Development) talked to us about their work and, in particular, their WASH campaign (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene).

Their mission statement says: "CED offers professional engineering support to people in rural areas of the developing world who wish to provide basic infrastructure, particularly the supply of clean water and sanitation, for their communities."

They currently have projects in Uganda, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and India. It was really interesting to hear how they find water and make it available, so changing lives. Those who came to the talk wanted to donate to CED and their donation was sent in support of CED's Tap Twinning Initiative.

We received a letter back in thanks, saying this had directly changed lives for those who had been struggling with water resources.



### **Spoon Carving Group.**

The origins of spoon carving, a brief history.

During the eleventh century, in what is now Italy, there lived a saint called St Peter Damien, who carved spoons. When they asked him why, he said there were four reasons:

1. Spoons are useful.
2. Spoons are humble - a wooden spoon is sometimes given to the last person in a race.
3. They are simple to carve; you don't need a special workshop or expensive equipment; merely an axe and a couple of knives.
4. They are revelatory. Every lump of wood contains a spoon; all you have to do is carve away the bits that aren't spoon.

Adam Hart-Davis who started the group, says “Some 20 years ago, soon after I embarked on green woodwork, I went on a spoon-carving course with Ben Orford, and carved my first spoon. Later I went on another course with Robin Wood, and carved some more. Then I got involved with Spoonfest, the summer spoon festival.

When I joined the u3a I saw there was no spoon-carving group in Ivybridge, so I decided to start one, and it survives to this day.”

The group currently has 15 members and that is the maximum size,

## GROUP NEWS

### **.Singing for Pleasure Group**

#### Our u3a Choir – A brief history

The choir was started in a small way in 2011 by Val Carmichael and Anne Kiddell, with just nine people in the top room in the Methodist Church. Val Carmichael became Group Leader, a post she held until 2017. We had one of two teething problems to start with, we needed a Musical Director and an accompanist! After trial and error, we eventually found a willing Musical Director (MD) in Sarah Westcott and an accompanist in Janet Lid-dicoat. Janet played at all the Choir's concerts, and she is still with us today.

The Choir performed their first Charity concert in December 2012, with twenty-four members, along with guest artists.

Following the success of this concert, the choir membership grew quite rapidly, and we continued to give concerts twice a year from 2013 to 2017. In 2017 Rhoda Lloyd and Janet McLachlan took over as joint Group Leaders, Rhoda continues as Group Leader today. In 2018 Ian Wiseman took over as MD, and we performed our last Christmas concert in 2019. These concerts, given in aid of local charities, raised between £10,000 and £12,000.

Then along came Covid in March 2020. Like most things the Choir went into lockdown.

Being aware that choir members were feeling the isolation, a WhatsApp Group was set up to keep up us in social contact. Zoom call meetings were also set up, even Janet, our accompanist, played for us so we could sing along albeit mutely! We tried a socially distanced return to choir in the Autumn, but lockdown hit again, and we finally returned January 2021 with, unfortunately, much reduced membership.

Janet McLachlan retired, and Carol Kempthorne kindly took over her role. The choir had almost gone backwards due to the pandemic, but we persevered, and we are gradually building up our members but not to what we had.

Ian Wiseman retired at the end of 2022 having kept us together after Covid. One of our members Jacqui Pulley valiantly volunteered to be Musical Director and, thanks to her, we are having incredibly positive rehearsals, and we will perform again.

## GROUP NEWS

### **Geology Group**

The Geology Group recently visited Wheal Martyn China Clay Mining Museum in Cornwall to hear about the history of China Clay mining and processing, as well as its geological origins.

The group welcomes new members to learn about the structure of the Earth on and beneath its surface and the processes that have shaped that structure.

## OTHER GROUP NEWS

### **Chair Yoga**

Chair Yoga has now got a new pair of co-ordinators in Silvia Rutley and Glo Horton.

### **Canasta**

John Davis has taken on the leadership of this group from August. It is now only for Canasta players and doesn't include other card games.

### **Dartmoor Discovery Walking**

Melvyn Stewart has handed over the leadership to John Reynolds.

### **Local History Group One**

Due to ill health Celia Ralph has handed over the reigns to Barbara Yea.

### **Growing Old in Mind and Body**

Dr Mike Bender, a Consultant Clinical Psychologist, will lead a programme of six workshops based on his book "A New Understanding of Dementia". These workshops will be held once a month from September, and will be co-ordinated by Brian Sabel (email: briansabel@gmail.com).

### **Current Affairs - New Members needed**

Discussing current affairs with each member taking it turns to choose a subject, the group meets every second Monday at 2pm in The Watermark. For more information please contact Michael Bailey.

## GROUP DIARY

DAY	First	Second	Third	Fourth
<b>Mon am</b>	Ukulele		Ukulele	Cryptic Crosswords
<b>Mon pm</b>	U3A Committee meeting	Current Affairs Film Club	General Monthly Meeting 2.00-4.00pm	Film Club
<b>Tue am</b>	Etymology 2		Book Group 1 History of Modern Britain	Local History 1 Local History 2
<b>Tue pm</b>	Bridge Book Group 2	Bridge Creative Writing Crime Book Club Wine Appreciation Group 1 6.30-8.00pm	Bridge Play Reading	Bridge Drama
<b>Wed am</b>			Etymology 1	French Improvers Dartmoor History Walking
<b>Wed pm</b>	Canasta	Science & Tech Needlecraft	Canasta Folk 7-9.00pm	Wine Appreciation Group 2
<b>Thurs am</b>	Music Appreciation	German Conversation Ancient Civilisation	Theology Philosophy Psychology Art for Fun	Dartmoor Discovery Walking
<b>Thurs pm</b>	Singing for Pleasure	Singing for Pleasure	Singing for Pleasure Film Club	Singing for Pleasure Drama Poetry
<b>Fri am</b>	Spoon Carving Guitar Group	Natural History Scrabble Litter Picking	Spoon Carving Geology Guitar Group	Chair Yoga General Discussion
<b>Fri pm</b>	Chair Yoga	Chair Yoga	Chair yoga	Quiz