

# Ivybridge u3a learn, laugh, live

## NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2025



“The Creation: the Division of Heaven, Earth and Sea”, a window designed by John Piper and interpreted in glass by Patrick Reyntiens in the Minster Church of St Andrew in Plymouth. Visited by Local History Group 1.

## CONTACT DETAILS

Email	Ivybridge.u3a@gmail.com
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

Happy New Year,.

I hope you had a happy and peaceful Christmas and are looking forward to an exciting New Year with Ivybridge U3A. Looking back to 2024 we had an increase in membership, some extra groups, some very enjoyable and interesting trips, and some great speakers.

The main challenge we face this year is the lack of volunteers to come onto the committee. Our U3A can't survive without members volunteering to help and I fear that halfway through the New Year, we may have four or five spaces unfilled on the committee, which makes it unworkable. So if you could spare two afternoons a month, please come and talk to me or any committee member. Please don't leave it to someone else because they are leaving it to you!

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

<b>20th January</b>	Life on the Licence Fee: behind the scenes at Blue Peter  <b>Alex Leger</b>
<b>17th February</b>	Being a Firefighter in London on the front line  <b>Roger Kendall</b>
<b>17th March</b>	Murder on Dartmoor  <b>Stephanie Austin</b>
<b>14th April</b>	The Mirror: The invention that changed our perception of self forever.  <b>Mike Haywood</b>
<b>19th May</b>	Wildlife expert and photographer

## 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

**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 1**

Led by Silvia Rutley & Glo Horton

Contact Silvia 07796 151141

Glo 07947 061625

### **CHAIR YOGA 2**

Led by Debbie Harris-Bowditch

Contact 07862 7499618

### **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**

### **DARTMOOR HISTORY**

### **WALKING**

Led by Stephen Woodcock

Contact 01752 691305 or

07739122374

### **DAY TRIPS**

Led by Rhoda Lloyd

Contact 07443 390043

### **DRAMA FOR FUN**

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

### **FOLK CLUB**

Led by Jan Niezgodna

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

### **GROWING OLDER IN**

### **MIND AND BODY**

**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 07757 262919

**LOCAL HISTORY**

**Group 1** Led by Barbara Yea

Contact 01752 895590

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

Contact Derek 01752 896784

Contact Di 01752 893989

**MUSIC APPRECIATION**

Led by Mike Swinson

Contact 01752 698041

**NATURAL HISTORY**

Led by Celia Ralph & Trudi Bell.

Contact Celia 01752 892555 or

Trudi 01752 896937

**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 07935292055

**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 07901 554143

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

Led by Averil Heaton

Contact 01752 897109

**UKELELE**

Led by Joy Horwell

Contact 01752 893402

**WINE APPRECIATION**

**Group 1**

Led by Ritsaert von Oven

Contact 07780 150750

**Group 2**

Led by Richard Matthews

Contact 07967 130599

## RECENT EVENTS

The talk at the **August** meeting was given by **Tony Davey**, the Engagement Officer at The Box.

Born in Plymouth and a proud 'Janner', Tony was an early supporter of the concept of joining the many collections held by the council under one roof. With financial help from Plymouth Council and the Lottery Fund, the Library building was earmarked for the project. As a listed building only the 1960/70 extension could be knocked down so that a new addition, The Box, could be added with a planned opening in 2020. In addition to this, a refurbishment of St. Lukes Chapel took place providing extra exhibition space.

Tony talked about the collections held, including those of the Plymouth City Museum & Art Gallery, Plymouth and West Devon Record Office, the South West Film and Television Archive, and the South West Image Bank.

He also spoke of the projects undertaken by The Box included the life and works of famous residents such as Sir Joshua Reynolds from Plympton. A self portrait of him and his sketch books had been purchased, which had led to another project being undertaken with young people looking and creating portraits.

Many of the projects are focused on communities in Plymouth including 'Pride in our Past', which focused on the years up to 1967 when it was illegal to be an openly gay man. Oral recordings were obtained from residents about of their lives "in the shadows". Another local project was called 'Make a Memory', based on a camp on the Rame Peninsular for the deprived children of Plymouth. Oral memories from the 1920s onwards were taken from thousands of children who attended these camps. From 1980 onwards the venue became a Art and Community hub, and they have continued the project to this day.

Future projects include an Imperial War Museum collaboration, Planet Ocean, JMW Turner and Ingrid Pollard, Devonport 200 and Plymouth Pictured. The latter is a collection of old photographs which became personal to Tony when he spotted his father in one labelled "Urchins playing on a bonbsite". Tony is very proud to be

## RECENT EVENTS

**Dr Chris Coote** spoke on ‘Concorde - Reminiscences of a fast lady’ at the **September** meeting.

Dr Coote is an Acoustics Engineer who worked for ten years in Concorde development with the Bristol Aerospace Company, joining initially as a Technical Apprentice. He was closely involved with the development of Concorde prototype 02, which he referred to as ‘my’ Concorde.

He started with some lesser known facts about the aeroplane:

- Take off and landing speed was twice as fast as for a normal aeroplane
- Full speed was 23 miles per minute but it was more fuel efficient when going fast
- It used 100 tons of fuel to cross the Atlantic, and 2% of its total load just taxiing to the runway
- It was always warm due to skin friction, and there was no condensation, but it expanded in size by 6-9 inches while in flight due to the heat generated
- The original order of 400 was reduced to 16 by the USA
- It’s final flight went from Heathrow, around the Bay of Biscay and over the Clifton Suspension Bridge before landing at Filton Airfield where it was built.

Chris’s first job was to make a drawing to show how much extra tarmac would be required to turn Concorde out of its hangar and without it going onto the grass verge of the runway. To do this he used a submarine periscope on the underside of the plane to check the position of the fore and main wheel tracks. Then guidelines were painted on the ground outside the hangar.

He was responsible for the construction of the window design, which had to overcome the problems with structural cracks due to vibration encountered in existing Comet aircraft. At 60,000 feet, Concorde’s

## RECENT EVENTS

He was also involved with testing the resilience of the windshields to bird collisions, explaining how they used a 'chicken gun' firing (initially dead, but eventually 'live') chickens at progressive samples until no cracks appeared.

He finished by describing the 1985 NATO exercise designed to test whether fighter planes could intercept Concorde as a target.

American and French planes failed the test, but the UK entry, a 20-year-old RAF Lightning XR749 completed a successful intercept and overtake but had to 'land out' due to lack of fuel.

Chris also showed us 'one of the best' photographs of Concorde at cruising altitude which showed the curvature of the earth.

The talk at the **October** meeting was given by **Ian Gasper**, a former Headmaster, volunteer with VSO and currently Chair of Devon and Cornwall Refugee Support Trustees. With the aid of many colourful photographs and videos, Ian recounted his experience of a cultural visit to Papua New Guinea, which he described as a bizarre but spectacular country. His trip concentrated on discovering the many tribes and their cultures and, because he is an avid birdwatcher, birds of paradise.

Papua New Guinea (PNG) encompasses the eastern half of New Guinea and its offshore Islands. It has been an independent country within the Commonwealth since 1975. It has a tropical climate and over one third of the island is covered by impenetrable forests. There are few roads outside the main cities and the only way to get around is by air, river or on foot. Over 700 discrete languages (including English which is taught in schools ) are spoken by the estimated 600 tribes and 800 ethnic groups. The majority of the population live in customary communities as subsistence farmers growing sweet potato, sago, coffee, bananas and mangoes. Diets are supplemented with fish and chicken, and pork cooked in pits under hot stones during festivals, . Tribal life is a male dominated society with tasks clearly defined between the sexes: men fishing, carving, and farming with the women cooking, looking after the



of these tasks being carried out; exquisitely patterned woven mats, used as house walls, and men hollowing huge logs to make canoes and communication devices which are ‘tapped’ to produce coded sounds which carry in the forest (although nowadays many tribes have access to mobile phones!). Village life is centred on the Spirit House, which only males are allowed to enter.

Ian showed many pictures of the fantastic costumes, masks and head-dresses for which the tribes are renowned; costumes made from feathers, bones and animal furs, various seashells and beads. Even beetles threaded on stiff cords to produce fashionable helmets. These costumes are used by dancers during their performances of the many rituals and festivals for entertainment of tourists and initiation ceremonies. During his visit Ian attended two major cultural festivals: one in Garoka attended by 100 tribes in an atmosphere of friendly competition during the national Independence celebrations and the Mask Festival in Rabaul. Ian’s photographs included images and videos of Mudmen, Crocodile men (many of whom have crocodile teeth marks made on their backs), and the famous Fire dance, where the performer dances on hot coals.

As a birdwatcher Ian found time to visit the National Park outside Port Moresby where he witnessed a number of parrots, sickle bills, birds of paradise, ground pigeons and a cassowary (a bird similar to an emu)

In **November** we were treated to a return visit by **Roger Browne**, a multi-talented musician, composer, director, writer and football fan who, as a jazz pianist, has accompanied many top international and UK based artists. Roger firstly introduced himself before explaining he was going to discuss the evolution and development of Ragtime, a misused word in his opinion, by telling the story of Scott Joplin.,

Scott Joplin was born in 1868 to parents who were former slaves. His father Giles worked on the railways and his mother Florence as a cleaner for, among others, Julius Weiss, a German- born immigrant music teacher in Texarkana, Texas. Julius allowed the young self-taught Scott to play his piano and when he realised the boy had talent, gave him lessons in piano technique, taught him to read music and

## RECENT EVENTS

Scott Joplin really wanted to write serious music, and become a pianist or composer, but the colour of his skin dictated what was possible at that time; so while he had actually written a symphony and a concerto quite early in his career, he was unable to get these published. So he kept to Jazz and Ragtime, and from the age of seventeen worked in the dingy clubs and brothels across America where such music was played. One of his earliest pieces was Maple Leaf Rag, named after a club of the same name, which was published as sheet music and gave him a small income from royalties. This was followed soon after by what is probably his most famous composition, The Entertainer. His fame was re-ignited in the 1970s when it was used as the theme music to the movie 'The Sting'.

As Roger delicately put it, Scott partook of some of the delights on offer in the brothels, and consequently contracted syphilis, condemning him to ill health for the rest of his life, mental deterioration and an eventual death aged only 47.

Roger's second musical performance was 'Solace' written by Joplin after the death of his new born son, and reflects his deep depression. His second marriage to Frankie Alexander lasted only ten weeks when she died of pneumonia, but she had persuaded him to return to composing. Some of these works, which included opera, Roger considered to be his best compositions.

Joplin's first opera 'A Guest of Honour' told the tale of Booker T Washington's invitation to dinner with Theodore Roosevelt in the White House. Washington was an advisor and spokesperson for Afro-American people to Roosevelt and the invitation caused outrage at the time. The takings from the production were stolen leaving Joplin bankrupt. The score of this opera was subsequently lost. His second opera 'Treemonisha', which tells the story of a young black woman who leads her community away from superstition and violence to embrace freedom, was not well received either. No-one wanted to produce it and Joplin's own production was so poor that, again, it was rejected by publishers. Joplin died soon after this, never having seen it properly produced for the stage.

In 1970 Houston Opera found the score and put it on and in 1973, three years after The Entertainer received recognition, Joplin's opera won the Pulitzer Prize. Roger finished off with a complete performance of “the Entertainer”.

## GROUP NEWS

### **Ukulele group**

The group continues to thrive with over 20 members and a repertoire of over 100 songs, meeting at Bittaford Hall twice every month. Some of us are very good and others still learning but we make it inclusive so we all have fun and come out smiling.

In March we entertained the ‘Wise and Wonderful’ social group at the Methodist Hall and had a very enjoyable afternoon with the audience joining in. We also performed at the Ivybridge Festival in Victoria Park.

We are grateful for Rick who generously gives up his time to lead our group, who tries to improve our skills and who is very patient with those that struggle. We have room for more members so if you think you would like to join us just contact Joy.



## GROUP NEWS



### **French Improvers Group**

At the end of July, the Ivybridge U3A French Improvers Group said farewell to our amazing Tutor, Christine Moulder.

Christine was with us for many years and we have been very grateful for her hard work, patience and guidance during that time. We wish her a well deserved retirement.

Our group is one of varied abilities and we are lucky to have some members with a high level of fluency in the language. In view of this, we have decided to continue now as a 'self tutoring' group and carry on progressing and having fun with learning, improving our grammar and conversation skills.

The group meets every 4th Wednesday of the month at The Westward Inn, Lee Mill between 10.30 a.m. and 12 noon."

## GROUP NEWS

### **Wine Appreciation Group 1**

The Wine Group 1 lunch at Sharpham Winery, now in their new home at Sandridge Barton. We enjoyed a three course tasting menu with local wines.



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### **u3a Litter Pickers**

Would you like to walk around Ivybridge getting friendly smiles from people you don't know – and expressions of thanks for what you are doing?

Yes, this is all about clearing unsightly litter from our little town.

Vic started this group with the aim of clearing up the litter and rubbish that we see on our streets. We meet outside the Watermark on the second Friday of each month at 10 a.m. Vic brings the litter picking sticks and bags and we are all assigned an area to clean up.

Come and join us.

### The Day Trip Group

This is a new 'group' although every member is invited to join and attend trips. Rhoda Lloyd was very brave to take on organising outings for us and so far we have enjoyed three such trips. The first was a trip to **Rosemore RHS Gardens** in April. The second was "**On the Tamar**", a boat trip from Plymouth to Calstock in July. The last was a day out at **Arlington Court and Carriage Museum** in October. All were very successful and enjoyed by those that attended. A huge thank you to Rhoda for organising these trips and the collection of the money for them. Lessons have been learnt and although there was a small short fall on one trip due to the cost of the coach, all further trips will be self funded.

If you have any bright ideas for a trip that would appeal to fellow members, please get in touch with Rhoda. Fresh inspiration is



## GROUP NEWS



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### **Geology Group**

On the 17th January 2025 Peter Brooks will be leading a session for the Geology Group. Peter will cover the basics of geology and it will be very suitable for both beginners who wish to learn about geology and those who have a basic understanding and would like to learn more.

The meeting will be held at 10am at Bittaford Hall, and existing and

## GROUP DIARY

DAY	First	Second	Third	Fourth
<b>Mon am</b>	Ukulele		Ukulele	Cryptic Crosswords
<b>Mon pm</b>	U3A Committee meeting	Current Affairs	General Monthly Meeting 2.00-4.00pm	
<b>Tue am</b>	Etymology 2		Book Group 1 History of Modern Britain	Local History 1 Local History 2
<b>Tue pm</b>	Bridge	Bridge Creative Writing Crime Book Club Wine Appreciation Group 1 6.00-8.00pm	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 7.00-9.00pm	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	Singing for Pleasure Poetry
<b>Fri am</b>	Spoon Carving Guitar Group	Natural History Scrabble Litter Picking	Spoon Carving Geology Guitar Group	Chair Yoga 1&2 General Discussion
<b>Fri pm</b>	Chair Yoga 1&2	Chair Yoga 1&2	Chair yoga 1&2	Quiz