



TORRIDGE THIRD AGE GROUP <https://u3asites.org.uk/torridge> **NEWSLETTER**

Issue 568

Aug 2026

Comments from the Chair

I guess we are all wishing for some substantial rain to relieve our parched soil and gardens. We should also be thankful that we have not had the wildfires which have affected other parts of the country, Europe and the rest of the world.

There are no notices this month, although I have been made aware of issues affecting Table Tennis at the ARC. I am hoping this can be resolved to mutual satisfaction.

The summer holidays are now upon us with extra traffic and pressure on car parking, so please take extra care when attending group meetings or travelling about.

If not away, why not join us for the monthly lunch at the Durrant Hotel on Wednesday 19th, there is plenty of parking and is on a bus route!

Best Regards

Graham Thompson
Chairman Torridge U3A

We welcome the following new members this month: Maxine Hunt, Rob Woodhouse.



Future coffee morning 2026 takes place in Northam Hall 10-12 o'clock

September 19th, November 21st

Chairman	Secretary	Membership Secretary	Newsletter Editor
Graham Thompson 1 Tarka Falls, Old Barnstaple Rd, Bideford EX39 4FL 07967 138576 graham.thompson53@outlook.com	Carolyn Kelly 5 Brookfield Street Bideford EX39 4ER 01237 479588 carolynkellygb@gmail.com	Julie Thompson 1 Tarka Falls, Old Barnstaple Rd, Bideford EX39 4FL 07814 609384 juliethompson549@gmail.com	Andy Robilliard 24 Oakland Av, Sticklepath Barnstaple EX31 2EN 07854 060009 Andy.robilliard@hotmail.co.uk

This month's notice board:

Monthly Lunch :

This month's lunch is on **Wednesday 19th Aug** please arrive in time to take your seat in the dining room by 12 o'clock.

Our Speaker will be Ian Gasper . A synopsis follows.

Central Asia was the central hub of the Silk Roads and not just commercially. This talk will introduce the Sogdians to you , who were the main traders. Also a host of scientists and thinkers and rulers such as Chinggis Khan and the Mongols and Tamburlaine.

Please remember to **book-in with Helen** before taking your seat, Lunch will be served at **1 o'clock**. (Cost **£18.50** for two courses plus coffee). As usual — Please pay at reception prior to making your way through to the dining room. **Any last minute cancellations have to be paid for**

Please could those interested in attending :

- Order their choice of meal by **14th Aug**
- if they haven't already done so.
- Contact Helen Summerhayes as follows Text or email (preferred)
- 07974311963 or helensumme@talktalk.net
- Please advise Helen If you are unable to attend, having booked lunch in order that the hotel can be given the correct numbers. Payment to the hotel on the day can be made by cash or card. **Please Also note late cancellations will have to be paid for**

MENU —

Roast Beef and Yorkshire Pudding
Served with Rich Gravy

Slow Braised Pork
with Roasted Red Onion and Red Wine Jus

Crispy Breaded Cod
with Homemade Tartare Sauce and Lemon

Sweet Potato, Spinach and Chickpea Curry
with Rice and Naan Bread

Homemade Ham and Cheese Salad

All served with Potatoes and a selection of Fresh Vegetables

Chefs Steamed Treacle Sponge and Vanilla Custard
or
Homemade Creme Caramel

or
Homemade Chocolate Brownie and Ice Cream

or
Fresh Fruit Salad

or
Ice Cream

or
Cheddar Cheese and Biscuits

Coffee or Tea

Helen always acknowledges texts and emails so if you do not get a reply please use alternative line of communication. Also a reminder to switch off mobile phones during the talk. Thank you

Miscellaneous: you do not receive your electronic version or have queries regarding the printed Newsletter, please contact; - **Graham Thompson**

07967 138576 or
graham.thompson53@outlook.com.

Availability & Booking of the Upper Room : - For details, see website, programme in Upper room or contact: - Graham Thompson

Group leader changes : -Please send note of any change in name or contact details to the group leader co-ordinator : Dennis Pavitt

01237 472616 or by email at dennispav@hotmail.co.uk.

Upper Room payments : - Payments due for the Upper Room, etc. should be passed to the Treasurer : - **Jenny Johns**

07835359189
treasurer4torridgeu3a@gmail.com

Proposed events : - If you are planning to hold an event, please contact Graham Thompson first to ensure that there are no clashes.

GROUP REPORTS



Art Group

Contact Julie Thompson

Or Chrissie Robilliard

We had another creative session exploring water colours, acrylics and other media. Talking to each other about our work over a cuppa was really informative and interesting too. Our next meeting is on Thursday 27th August.



Badminton – Group Contacts

Wednesday: Diane Care

Anne Scott

We meet each Wednesday at 10am for an hour of fun badminton at the Atlantic Racquet Centre, Bideford where we use 3 courts. All equipment can be provided free of charge, each session costs £2.50. We are full at present but have a waiting list if you're interested in.

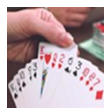


Bird Watching Group

Group Contact: Irene Hahn

On

At the time of going to press the Birdwatching Group outings for July have not taken place. They are being held later in the month in the hope of seeing the return of birds from their more northerly breeding grounds. Our Group is full but we are happy to add to a Waiting List.

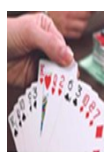


Bridge for Beginners

Group contacts: Richard Hunt

Bridge for Beginners runs from 2 pm until 4 pm every Friday afternoon in the Upper Room in Northam. The group is led by Richard Hunt who will offer a complete beginners class, concentrating on "natural" bidding sequences, and a subsequent improvers class to include more complex "conventional" bidding systems. A practice group could then run after these classes, and further beginners classes could be arranged, as and when the need arises.

You will not need to have a playing partner to come along to the group as individual members are welcome. For further information please contact Richard Hunt by email



Bridge for Improvers

Group contacts: Sandy Madden

Tuesday evening Improvers Bridge is now starting at 6.45 for 2 hours finishing at 8.45 in the Upper Room. We are very happy to welcome new members. We are a friendly group. Over the past year we have sadly lost a

few of our members and we would welcome anyone who might think of coming to actually come and 'try us out'. We play standard Acol and are a friendly group enjoying light hearted bridge. Yes there is such a thing! Please come and see for yourselves.



Book Group 1.

Group contact: Pat Pavitt

On

My Friends by Fredrik Backman

A coming of age novel following Louisa, an aspiring artist grieving her best friend, who becomes entangled in the mysterious story of four teenagers depicted in a famous painting. The group opinions on the book were mixed. The majority didn't like the book, but the other three thought it was phenomenal.

Next month's book is "A Town like Alice" by Nevil Shute. Coralie Dean



Book Group 3.

Group contact Jo Sampson

On

The Trees by Percival Everett

The story turned out to be a satire on the rather gruesome subject of mass murder, but not without its own blend of humour. Its inspiration came from true stories of lynchings in the deep south of the USA.

The Mississippi murders are puzzling to the somewhat disinterested sheriff & his deputy & soon more detectives are involved; and eventually the FBI. A page-turner despite the references to racism & the provocative tone.

Most group members enjoyed reading this novel & it generated our usual energetic discussion.



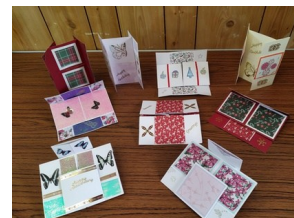
Crafty Cards & Creative Craft Class.

Group contact Alison Tamplin

or Carolyn Kelly

Crafty Carding

This month members made interactive cards, that is cards that can be moved, we made never ending cards a very simple construction but when assembled are amazing and great fun. Myself and Carolyn are away for most of August so no craft classes. We will resume on Wednesday 16th September not sure what we will be making I will let you know beforehand, please remember we welcome new members, supply all equipment and materials, more more information please contact Alison or Carolyn



Creative Craft

This month members made Kusedama flowers a Japanese paper folding method, we welcomed Linda a new member, the ladies had great fun mastering the fold and after that were making lovely flowers. Myself and Carolyn are away for most of August so no craft classes. We



will resume on Thursday 17th September and entering the world of Sashiko embroidery please remember we welcome new members, supply all equipment and materials, For more information please contact Alison or Carolyn.



Croquet.

Group contact: Anne Young

Braunton U3A runs a croquet group during the summer and invite members from the surrounding U3A's to join the group.

The group meets weekly at Barnstaple Croquet club, Raleigh Meadow, off St. Georges Road, Barnstaple, EX31 4UX, Tuesdays, weather permitting, during the summer from 2pm to 4pm.

No experience is necessary and all equipment and coaching is provided wear comfortable clothes and flat shoes, you may need a waterproof coat and a drink.

The cost is £4 to join or rejoin the group and £4 for every session you attend.

Contact Anne Young

for more information and to book your place.

Come along to meet friendly people for a fun afternoon



Devon Inns.

Group contact: Peter Mills

Or Marilyn Clarke

It is always a pleasure to drive out to The Black Venus Inn at Challacombe and enjoy a good lunch in a lovely old Inn, this visit did not disappoint, August this year there will not be a venue, the next will be in September on the 10th, details will be issued about the venue in the August Newsletter. Last year we made an exception to our tradition of not meeting in August, this year other factors have arisen in August which prevent my arranging and attending the lunch, we may well have a venue in 2027.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and I look forward to seeing you in September.

If our group activity interests you, please contact either



Digital Camera Group 1 & 2

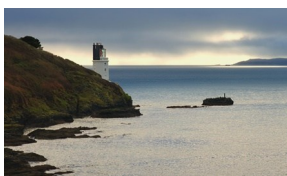
Group contact: Dennis Pavitt

Digital Camera Group 1 has vacancies for one or two new members. The group meets at 2 pm on the 2nd Wednesday of each month in the Upper Room in Northam. Whatever type of photography you are interested in, whether you use a traditional camera or a smart phone, you can come along and share some of your images with our sociable and friendly group. For further information please contact Dennis Pavitt on dennispav@hotmail.co.uk.

This month's subject is - All at or near the beach or sea.

Group 1

No 1 Bali Fishermen - Dave Parker



No 2 Fading Light, St Anthony's

Head - Michael Hatcher



No 3 Limpets, Rockpool - Dave Holloway



No 4 Rockport Reflection - Melvyn Lowther

Group 2



Instow wreck Judy James

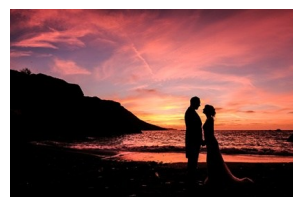


Last One Standing - Peter Denard



Port
Gardian
Mandy
King

Sunset Silhouette Mark Collins



Discussion Group.

Group contact: Graham Thompson

Unfortunately, Marianne Richards has had to step down from leading the group due to ill health. I would like to express my thanks to her for coming up with the idea of starting a group where people could sit and enjoy the spoken words of prose or poetry. If any of our members would like to take over this role from Marianne, please contact me by email to discuss this further, at dennispav@hotmail.co.uk. Thanks, Dennis Pavitt.



French. Group contact Jane Williams or Debbie Fisher

Our group is conversation based and members have a reasonable level of vocabulary and grammar knowledge. We also listen to native french speakers via you tube. It is not suitable for beginners.



First Friday Walkers

Group contact: Margaret Curtis

Jan will be leading our walk on 4th September 10.30am start.

Meet on the burrows road at the Skern, just past the toll hut and over the bridge. Fingers crossed there won't be charging by then but might be useful to share lifts if possible.

The 4mile circular walk follows the coast to Sandymere and then back via the burrows. It will be a relaxed, easy walk with the only potential hazard being golfers!

Lunch will be at the Guillimot Westward Ho!

There is no need to pre book food but please let me know by Tuesday 1st September if you would like to join us for the walk and at the restaurant.



Knit & Stitch Group.

Group contact: Heather Williams

We meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursday afternoons at 2pm in the Upper Room. We enjoy working on our own projects, finding out about what everyone else is making, having a chat and a cup of tea or coffee. We often have yummy refreshments at Knit & stitch



History Group

Group contact: Peter Flacke

We heard first about Qin Shi Huang (259-210 BC), who unified seven warring states to create China and become its first emperor. He is best known for his grandiose mausoleum of which the famous Terracotta Army forms a small part. The pyramid containing his tomb has not been excavated yet, partly for fear of poisoning from the mercury said to have been used to represent rivers in the map of China within.

We then heard about the Great Consuls mine near Tavistock which was set up in 1844 to exploit a rich seam of copper extending for two miles. The output was so great that a railway line was built to Morwhellam

Quay on the Tamar to facilitate exports. As copper was discovered in other parts of the world and prices fell production switched to arsenic. The mine was abandoned in 1903 and today the area is open to the public as a World Heritage site.



Let's Talk About Books Group contact

Chris Moss or Jane Villiers

The 'homework' for this meeting had been the theme of far, far away and this resulted in being shown a book of photographs of Tokyo apartments, tiny and crowded with possessions; the tale of Ninth Street Women about female abstract expressionist painters in New York in the 50's; The Glass Maker set in Venice and revolving around Murano glass and The Time Traveler's Wife which has been classified as both science fiction and romance. From the Penguin travel series we heard about Marco Polo's journeys around the Indian Ocean and of the free-spirit Esmond in India by Ruth Praver Jhabvala whose writing has been likened to Jane Austin. Goodbye to Russia (Sarah Rainsford) and Putin's Russia (Anna Politkovskaya) were recommended with the caveat that

the latter book included descriptions of the appalling exploitation of Russian soldiers by their officers. Poor Artists, reviewed highly but criticised by the our presenter as indulgent and uncritical, talked about the current art scene; Margaret Atwood's The Testaments was described as following on from The Handmaid's Tale, whilst This is Happiness (Niall Williams) was a tale set in Ireland at the time electricity arrived. How Democracies Die (Levitsky & Ziblatt) and A Move Abroad (Ian McEwan) were outlined the latter, interestingly and perhaps surprisingly, starting with an oratorio. Finally Cutting for Stone (Verghese) told of conjoined (but later separated) twins being adopted in Addis Ababa and was recommended as a very good read. Along the way we digressed into Freda Kahlo, the difficulty of reading large books in bed and a somewhat disappointing itinerary for the imminent Appledore book festival. Our subject for next month is food



Mindfulness and Wellbeing

Group

contact Irene Baxter

The inner critic

We discussed the judgemental and critical mind that leads to the inner critic within ourselves. We discussed how the brain is predictive. If we mainly feel and believe negatively about ourselves, and harshly judge ourselves, these beliefs will be stored in our memory banks. This habitual way of thinking will continue to happen unless we pause, challenge them with kindness and compassion. The amygdala's role, and past negative experiences and comments were factors that we considered.



Mah jong

Grp Contact: Sue Smith

The group meets from 10am to 12md on most Mondays of the month in the Upper room Northam. All equipment is supplied and the session costs £1. We have spaces for new players, no previous experience of playing is needed as we will teach new members.

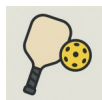


Music—Blues/Rock.

Group Contact: David Mclellan

A somewhat diminished group - hit by illness or holiday commitments - contributed to July's selection of Blues and Rock. Cork rocker Rory Gallagher set the afternoon's scene, reminiscing a visit to a fairground, with the track Tattooed Woman. A rounded and mellow track - The Black Sea - was presented from the forthcoming album by Rothery and Hacket. Not the name of men's outfitters but a classic guitar pairing of Steve Rothery (of Marillion fame) and Steve Hackett (Genesis). Another famous guitarist - Stevie Ray Vaughan then contribut-

ed the classic track The Sky is Crying. Mellow could also describe the first of two tracks – Blues Latino -from the Vargas Blues Band. A change of genre was heralded by Bob Marley's Trench town Rock followed by Linkin Park and the track Crawling from their album of the same name. **NB:** *We meet at my home in Roundswell every second Thursday afternoon. Don't hesitate to email or phone if you would like to sample a session; with a view to joining our group and sharing examples of Blues and Rock tracks*



PickleBall Group contact: Ralf Bennett

telephone, text, or WhatsApp on

The Pickleball group meets at 10am for 1 hour every Monday at the ARC. It's energetic and a lot of fun. Equipment is provided and the cost to play is £3.

The group is full at present with 25 listed players and capacity for 16 players on 4 courts with a maximum of 4 further players sitting , out poised to interchange after each game.

We have a waiting list . We operate a POLL system through the WhatsApp group asking members to vote by the preceding Friday; yes or no as to their availability on the next Monday .

It works exceptionally well. This enables us to book the required number of courts and not waste money on unused courts. It's a great and sociable group .



Playreading.

Group contact: Christine Holmes

There was no report this month



Practical Philosophy

Group Contact: **Stuart Mealing**

Or Irene Baxter

Following on from our theme of world religions we looked at Zionism – both in its historical context and its current relevance for the situation in the Middle East. We discussed the current situation in the region, and we agreed that past trauma incites violence. We looked at the UN definition of violence, and the distinction between Negative Peace (the absence of war and violence) and Positive Peace which is based on sustainability and resilience.

For our August meeting we will discuss Identity Politics.



Science, Technology & Society.

Group contact: **Barry Zussman:**

At our last meeting, guest speaker Martin Day entertained us with a fascinating talk about his long career in aerospace engineering, and in particular his involvement in the design and construction of precision instruments carried on British rockets (at Woomera), European Space Agency satellites, and even the NASA space shuttle.

There's no meeting this month, but we'll be back in September.



Short/Soft Tennis - Group Contacts:

Tuesday session: Janet Broomhead (Jan)
Email

Thursday session: John Curry

Atlantic Racquet Centre Every Tuesday Session 2pm for 1 hour. Group leader Jan Broomhead
Cost £2:50p. All equipment provided free. **PLACES NOW AVAILABLE !!**

Every Thursday Session 3pm for 1 hour. Group leader John Curry

Cost £2:50p. All equipment provided free
PLACES NOW AVAILABLE.

Never tried short tennis ? Well now you can as your first session is free. We are a very sociable bunch and you will fit right in. Good exercise and plenty of fun too. Please ring or email In advance to avoid disappointment. Or phone Ralph Bennett to enquire .



Snooker (Tue & Wed)

Current Contact: Dennis Pavitt

The U3A Snooker Group has two separate weekly sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings at the Kingsley Hall in Westward Ho! We spend two enjoyable hours trying to re-capture past snooker skills and enjoying the company of similar snooker enthusiasts. If you would like further information please give me a call or send me an email.



Table Tennis.

Group Contact: **Christine Isaac**

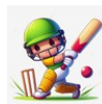
The Table Tennis Group are still enjoying our sessions at the Youth Centre and are gradually picking up numbers again. We would be happy to see any new players that might wish to give us a try



Beginners Table Tennis.

Group Contact: Helen Summerhayes

We are a friendly group and welcome complete beginners and those that perhaps haven't played for awhile



Walking Cricket

Group contact: Dennis Pavitt

Our July sessions were well attended; the weather was fine, the enthusiasm and enjoyment levels were high! Our August sessions take place on Monday August 3rd and Monday August 17th from 9.30 am till 11.00am. Walking Cricket is open to all U3A members and provides light exercise and enjoyable social interaction. It uses lighter weight bats and balls and the game takes place at a comfortable walking pace. All equipment, coaching and parking is free, plus you get complimentary membership of the Cricket Club as well! Refreshments are at the end of each session (after all it is Cricket) and a donation towards the cost of tea and cakes would be appreciated. If you have not yet tried Walking Cricket and would like any further information, please contact me by email



Third Friday Walkers.

Group contact: **Linda Burgess-Bentley**
On

The August walk will be led by Brian as follows:

On Friday 21st August, meet at the Golf Club Car Park, Westward Ho! for a walk start at 10.30am. Circular walk from the Golf Club round the burrows 3-4 miles. Lunch at The Golf Club. Please would you let me know by Monday 17 August so that I can book the table/s. Also if you are joining the walk but not taking the lunch then also please let me know. No pre-orders required. We will be given the menu when we arrive and I will make a list of each member's name and their menu choice and leave with the chef before we start the walk. So please arrive at the car park in time for this. Look forward to seeing you. Brian Tilbury



Ukulele group.

Group contact **Richard Patmore**
On

The Ukulele Group has continued to meet for practice during the recent hot weather. We also had one performance in Bideford for the Visually Impaired Club, who meet in the sea scouts hut in the centre of the park, which was most enjoyable.

DIARY PAGE

ACTIVITY	DATE	START	END	LOCATION
<u>Groups below meet every week</u>				
Badminton	Every Wednesdays	10:00	11:00	Atlantic Racquets Centre
Bridge for Beginners	Every Friday	14:00	16:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Bridge for Improvers	Every Tuesday evening	18:45	20:45	Upper Room St Margarets
Croquet (Braunton)	Every Tuesday - (May to Sept)	14:00	16:00	Croquet Club Barnstaple
French	Every Tuesday	10:30	12:30	Upper Room St Margarets
Pickle Ball Group 1	Every Monday	10:00	11:00	Atlantic Racquet Centre
Pickle Ball Group 1	Every Monday	11:00	12:00	Atlantic Racquet Centre
Short/Soft Tennis Thursday	Every Thursday afternoon	15:00	16:00	Atlantic Racquets Centre
Short/Soft Tennis Tuesday	Every Tuesday Afternoon	14:00	15:00	Atlantic Racquets Centre
Snooker on Tuesday	Every Tuesday from 10 a.m till 12 noon	10:00	12:00	Kingsley Snooker Hall
Snooker on Wednesday	Every Wednesday 10 am - 12 noon	10:00	12:00	Kingsley Snooker Hall
Table Tennis	Every Thursday	10:00	12:00	Bideford Youth Centre on the Pill
Table Tennis for beginners	Every Thursday between 10.00 and 11.00	10:00	11:00	Atlantic Racquets Centre
<u>Groups below meet two or three times a month</u>				
Knit and Stitch group	1st & 3rd Thursdays	14:00	16:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Mahjong Morning	1st and 3rd Monday between	10:00	12:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Play Reading	Every fortnight on Mondays at 2pm	14:00	16:00	private members houses various
Ukulele Group	1st & 3rd Mondays of every month	14:00	16:00	Northam Hall
<u>Groups below meet once a month</u>				
Art Group	4th Thursday of the month	11:00	13:00	Northam Community Hall
Bird Watching	TBA			Contact Group Leader
Book Group 1	3rd Tuesday in every month	14:00	16:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Book Group 3	1st Tuesday in every month	14:30	16:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Crafty Cards	3rd Wednesday in every month	09:30	12:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Creative Craft Class	3rd Thursday in the month	10:00	12:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Devon Inns	2nd Thursday in every month	12:00	14:00	See Newsletter or Contact Group Lead
Digital Camera Group 1	2nd Wednesday every month	14:00	16:30	Upper Room St Margarets
Digital Camera Group 2	3rd Wednesday in Month	15:00	17:30	Upper Room St Margarets
Discussion Group	1st Wednesday in every month	10:30	12:30	Upper Room St Margarets
First Friday Walkers	1st Friday in every month	10:30	13:00	See Newsletter or Contact Group Lead
History Group	2nd Thursday of Month	10:00	12:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Lets Talk About Books	4th Monday of the month at 2.00 pm	14:00	16:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Mindfulness and Well-Being	1st Thursday each month	10:30	12:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Monthly Lunch	3rd Wednesday in Month	12:00	15:00	The Durrant Hotel, Bideford
Music - Blues/Rock	2nd Thursday in every month	14:00	16:00	Contact Group Leader
Practical Philosophy	2nd Tuesday in every month	14:00	16:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Science, Technology & Society	4th Tuesday in every month	14:30	16:30	Upper Room St Margarets
Third Friday Walkers	3rd Friday in every month	10:30	13:00	See Newsletter or Contact Group Lead