



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

Issue 567

July 2026

Comments from the Chair

The blistering temperatures of this last week reminded me of 1976. I am sure most members can remember what they were doing that year; - I was running flowrate experiments - listening to water re circulating around pipes while sweating buckets!

AGM - The AGM this year was quick and painless as there were no contentious issues for debate. Of the things to note, the committee remains the same with the exception of **Heather Williams** who is stepping down as Treasurer. The New Treasurer is now confirmed as **Jenny Johns**. Obviously there is a lot of work going on behind the scenes to enable the handover; - a note will be sent to Group Leaders when all is in place.

Heather will continue as a co-opted member for the time being to cross over with the new Treasurer and also on a sub committee reviewing the various policies we must abide by. My thanks to Heather for her hard work over the last few years and to Jenny for taking on one of the crucial roles within our U3A!

Membership: Following the AGM, the membership now stands at 334. During the next few weeks we will be asking Group Leaders to check member's cards. Note that if you did not include a stamped addressed envelope for your card, it can be found in the small pink box in the Upper Room. Alternatively please check with your Group Leader.

I hope you all enjoy the rest of the summer with more moderate temperatures and look forward to seeing new faces at the monthly lunch at the Durrant Hotel which is receiving great reviews.

Best Regards

Graham Thompson
Chairman Torridge U3A

We welcome the following new members this month: Andrea Miller, Ann Murch, Liz Makeig-jones, George Baxter, Ian Coggins, Linda Sleep, Oliver Myers, Patrick Kivlin, Robert Beck, Sandra Poucher, Sian Annette Coggins, Simon Poucher.



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	Carolyn Kelly	Julie Thompson	Andy Robilliard

This month's notice board:

Monthly Lunch :

This month's lunch is on **Wednesday 15th July** please arrive in time to take your seat in the dining room by 12 o'clock.

Our Speaker will be Danny Clark Geology of North Devon

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 **Friday 10th July**
- if they haven't already done so.
- Contact Helen Summerhayes as follows Text or email (preferred)
- 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 — 15th July

Roasted Chicken Ballatine
with Mushroom Thyme Veloute

Local Cumberland sausage served with
rich onion gravy

Poached Loin of Cod with Spinach and white wine
Sauce

Vegetable Lasagne with Garlic Bread

Scotch Egg Salad

All served with Potatoes and a selection of fresh vegetables

Homemade Chocolate Profiteroles with chocolate
sauce

or
Sticky Toffee Pudding with Toffee sauce

or
Apple Crumble with Custard

or
Fresh Fruit Salad

or
Ice Cream
or

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

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**

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

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

Email

Or Chrissie Robilliard

Email

We spent a pleasant morning dabbling at our different projects and sharing tips and info over a cup of tea or coffee. We have room for a few new members.



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.

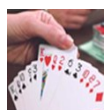


Bird Watching Group

Group Contact: Irene Hahn

On

The Birdwatching Group had an evening meeting in June and were pleased with what was achieved. The Group is now full of enthusiastic members but I am happy to add to a waiting list



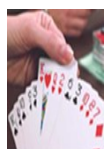
Bridge for Beginners

Group contacts: Richard Hunt

Email

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 at richardhuntf12@gmail.com



Bridge for Improvers

Group contacts: Linda Nicholls on

Sandy Madden on

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

The Women by Kristin Hannah

The Women is the story of Frankie, a 20 year old girl who impulsively joins the Army Nurses Corps to join her brother who is serving in Vietnam. It is a well researched account, and fitting tribute to the female service women who were there. A story of courage, friendship and love, as well as subjects such as PTSD, which was not recognised in service women. The book was enjoyed by the group, who were mostly ignorant of the horrors faced by these women and the changed America on their return.

Our book for next month is My Friends by Fredrik Backman.

Judy Seabright.



Book Group 3.

Group contact Jo Sampson

On

For our June meeting, by way of a change, we each chose our favourite book to bring along and say what we like about it. A variety of authors were represented from different parts of the world. The readings included poems from both the 19th and 21st centuries, excerpts from modern novels and classic Bronte. The selected authors made astute observation on human nature and relationships. The mood ranged from wise advice through adventure to raucous humour. Our read for July is The Trees by Percival Everett.

Maggie Hitchens



Crafty Cards & Creative Craft Class.

Group contact Alison Tamplin

or Carolyn Kelly

Crafty Carding

This month members returned an old favorite of mine Tea Bag Folding. It always amazes me even using the same pattern, how our members create such a wide variety of cards, do please look at the photo. Next month. Wednesday 15th July

shall be doing Interactive cards, that's cards that have moving parts, new members are always welcome and we supply all materials and equipment. For more information please contact Alison 07311758416 or Carolyn 01237-479588



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we

Creative Craft

This month Val hosted the class and we made four different

designed boxes, Val is our boxes Queen and it was a fun packed, lovely morning, Next month Thursday 16th July we will be making Kusedama flowers. If you don't know this Japanese craft then please come along, new members are always welcome and we supply all material and equipment. For more information please contact Alison 07311758416 or Carolyn 01237-479588



Croquet.

Group contact: Anne Young on

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

The group members will be meeting for the next lunch on Thursday 9th July at The Black Venus, Challacombe, Barnstaple, EX31 4TT.....(01598 763251). Challacombe is on the edge of Exmoor 38 Kms or 47 minutes from Westward Ho!, good journey, lovely countryside

Gather in the Bar between 12 - 12.15

Free car parking across from the Inn.

Food selection will be made on the day from the specials board and daily menu.

U3A members are welcome to attend as are members guests.

Please confirm your desire to attend by Tuesday 7th a.m



Digital Camera Group 1 & 2

Group contact: Dennis Pavitt on

This month's subject is Parts of buildings, architecture, designs.

Group 1

1, Bombay sapphire distillery - Melvyn Irvine



2 Towers, Autoir - Jane Irvine

3 St Winefrides Holywell - Paul Davies



4 Pannier Market - Dave

Group 2

An Image within an Image Mandy King



Big Ben & Scotland Yard - Peter Denard



The Forth railway bridge near Edinburgh Jenny Johns



Zennor Judy James



Discussion Group.

Group contact: **Graham Thompson**

The topic suggested by Graham this month was Can We Afford Principles. We then discussed many topics. Firstly whether benefits should be reassessed? Care Homes and the services required. Where does our money go - people have different principles. It is felt there is terrible inequality. Trickle down economics. The rich employ the poor. Degrees are no longer so popular. Due to huge debt after and young like to get on the employment ladder. Seems apprenticeships and learning on the job is the way to go for some. Do students use AI as their answers. Shifting the words about. Need to be computer literate. AI may not always be correct. Discussed Nicola Sturgeon and how much she knew about her husband's issues. Back to what Principles we live by? This caused a laugh. Briefly then discussed Trump position, water companies, substandard transport system, how expensive taxis are, rubbish postal system and rubbish bins. Also was told there is a new bus service in our area - No. 17 - Monday to Friday.



Favourite Words Aloud

Group contact:

on

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 denispav@hotmail.co.uk. Thanks, Dennis Pavitt.



French. Group contact Jane Williams or Deb-

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
on

Brian will be leading our walk on **7 August**

10.30am Meet at the(Old Cattle Market) Council Office Car Park, Bideford. £2.50/day to park. Walk along the coast path to Appledore. About 3 miles. Bus back. (Don't forget your bus pass). Lunch at The Seagate. Please would you let me know by Wednesday 29 July whether you will be joining this walk or not so that I can determine whether the number is over 15 in which case I will get the menu from Seagate, circulate and do a pre-order. Also if you are joining the walk but not taking the lunch then please let me know. Meanwhile I shall provisionally make a booking fairly soon because August is peak holiday season. Look forward to seeing you. Brian

Please note earlier confirmation date of Wednesday 29th July.



Knit & Stitch Group.

Group contact: Heather Williams

On

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**

Email

The History Group took a break in June. Back in July.



Let's Talk About Books Group contact

Chris Moss or Jane Villiers

The group met on a sweltering Monday, chose water rather than tea, and discussed the month's topic which was 'small books' of under 200 pages. The first described was Life on a Devon Scrapyard (Peggy Harris), the first of two she wrote about her family working the scrapyard at Lettaford on Dartmoor. This was followed by The Power of Three (Pamela Vass) about the wooden computer made by Thomas Fowler from Great Torrington, born in 1777, who has been called 'Devon's forgotten genius' and whose construction is reproduced in the Science Museum. We then heard about Degas and his Model, an account by a model of his published soon after his death in which Alice Michel (a pseudonym) tells of her time working for the mean, grumpy curmudgeon; of Six Ways to make a Bed (Davide Minter) which gave women - of course - suitable instructions in a prewar booklet; of photographic Snaps as Art (Graham King); of the journey towards forgiveness by Marian Partington after her sister was murdered by the Wests in Salvaging the Sacred: Lucy, my Sister; and of Mr Beck's Underground Map (Ken Garland) which told of the fascinating development of the current diagramatised London underground map. Murder on Line One (Jeremy Vine) was considered to be badly written and remained unfinished; whilst My Brilliant Friend (Elena Ferrante) impressed. In the Penguin 'Great Loves' series Giovanni's Room (James Baldwin) was the story of a bisexual in a relationship with a murderer told on the eve of his guillotining whilst A Russian Affair (Anton Chekhov) was a book of beautifully written short stories. The Man who Planted Trees (Jean Giono) told how the act of a man planting acorns in a sterile landscape led to a transformation into a lush forest and was accompanied by interesting wood prints; Abstract Art (in the Methuen series) explained that subject; and Malone Dies was a rare novel by Samuel Becket. Finally Small Things Like This was another gem by Claire Keegan telling of a child saved from an Irish mother and baby home. Next month we have the theme of 'far, far away'.



Mindfulness and Wellbeing

Group contact **Irene Baxter**

On

We went over the contents of the past four weeks. We relooked at the neuroscience that supports the therapy of Mindfulness. We practiced using the breath and body

scan techniques, and how we mindfully manage our feelings and thoughts. We are full, but there is a waiting list.



Mah jong

Grp Contact: Sue Smith

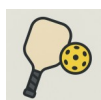
The group meets from 10am to 12md on most Mondays of the month in the Upper room Northam. All equipment is supplied and the session costs £1. We have spaces for new players, no previous experience of playing is needed as we will teach new members.



Music—Blues/Rock.

Group Contact: David Mclellan

June's session covered a variety of blues and rock artists/bands. George Thorogood and the Destroyers were represented by the track One Bourbon, One Scotch and One Beer; a great starter for any social event ! The White Stripes played their classic Seven Nation Army from the Elephant album and we were entertained by two vinyl tracks from LPs by Blodwyn Pig and Wishbone Ash. Popular band Led Zeppelin played Tangerine while blues / rock artist Joe Bonomassa gave us Blues from Desperation. We Will Meet Again - not to be confused with the much softer and whimsical 1940s Vera Lynn tune - was belted out by hard rock band Inglorious and Jeff Beck's incomparable Hammerhead track concluded the session's first half. In the second half we sampled part of the Phil Lynott tribute concert: One Night in Dublin by Gary Moore and Friends which was staged at the Point Theatre in 2005 and which had featured on a recent Sky Arts programme. In July we have a free -for-all session and looking ahead to August we have the theme "Classic Riffs"; which should give us plenty of choice.



PickleBallGroup contact: Ralf Bennett

telephone, text, or WhatsApp on

The pickleball group is now closed to new members. If you wish to I can add you to a waiting list . We have 25 members and access to 4 courts every Monday 10-11am.

Members pay £3 for a 1 hr session .

It is imperative that all members join the WhatsApp group or find a way to let me know by Friday noon preceding the Monday session ; if they cannot attend or wish to leave the group.

I can then adjust the number of courts we hire at £10 each .



Playreading.

Group contact: Christine Holmes

There was no report this month



Practical Philosophy

Group Contact: **Stuart Mealing on**

Or Irene Baxter

Continuing our look at world religions we arrived this month at Judaism, one of the world's oldest. Having primed us with two short circulated videos Gill took us through the background, history, traditions and rites of Judaism which proves to be not just a religion but also a culture and a heritage derived through the mother's birthline. You can convert to the religion but not to the birthline and you can be Jewish whilst holding any or no faith. Jews have a long history of persecution and a tradition of large families and we considered some of features of Jewish life that one can recognise through films such as Yentl (Barbra Streisand) and others. Amongst the requirements of strict Jewish life that we noted were circumcision of male children and the avoidance of creating a spark or fire on the Sabbath which rules out, amongst other things, pressing a lift button. We looked at the arguments surrounding Palestine as being a promised land for Jews but will return to Zionism as a subject for us next month. Surprisingly, given our subject, we did not divert as we often do to consideration of the ongoing Gaza conflict though we did ask whether Israel was now nationalist and commented on the growing lack of discrimination between anti-semitism and criticism of the Israeli government. We then moved on to a broader discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of various belief systems which we expect to continue in coming months.



Science, Technology & Society.

Group contact: **Barry Zussman:**

On

At our next meeting, on Tuesday 28th July, we'll be welcoming guest speaker and former space scientist Martin Day, from South Molton u3a, to talk to us about the UK's involvement in the early days of the American & European space programmes, and his own contributions to the design and construction of small, unmanned satellites, and the instruments they carried. He has a fascinating story to tell, so I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on the day.



Short/Soft Tennis - Group Contacts:

Tuesday session: Janet Broomhead (Jan)
Email

Thursday session:

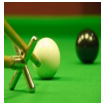
Atlantic Racquet Centre Every Tuesday Session 2pm for 1 hour. Group leader Jan Broomhead
Tel 07815814271 Cost £2:50p. All equipment provided free. PLACES NOW AVAILABLE !!

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 07552776665 .



Snooker (Tue & Wed)

Current Contact: Dennis Pavitt
On

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**
On

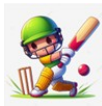
The Table Tennis Group are still enjoying our sessions at the Youth Centre and are gradually picking up numbers again. We would be happy to see any new players that might wish to give us a try



Beginners Table Tennis.

Group Contact: Marion Coles

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



Walking Cricket

Group contact: Dennis Pavitt
On

The weather finally allowed us to start our new season in June, where we had a good turn out with over a dozen people attending our first practise session. Our next session takes place on Monday July 6th 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

For any further information, please contact me by email at dennispav@hotmail.co.uk



Third Friday Walkers.

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

Pat will lead our walk on Friday 17 July. Details as follows: The walk today is at Arlington Court, an old favourite. I am sure you all know how to get there. Car parking is National Trust which needs to be paid for if you are not a member. The walk itself is on public footpaths which, of course, are free. We set off at 10.30am for a circular wander of about 3.5 - 4 miles, some of it is downhill, coming back is uphill. It is on hard footpaths so fairly easy. Our eating venue is the Pine Arms, East Down, which is approximately 10 minutes drive from Arlington Court.

Names to Pat please, by Tuesday 14 July. Hope to see you all there.



Ukulele group.

Group contact **Richard Patmore**
On

The Ukulele Group has been pleased to welcome several new members to its practices recently. We finished the month with a really enjoyable gig at the Bluebell and Primrose homes in Westward Ho! Fortunately, we played outside, undercover and at the end of the week, when the weather was cooler. 10 of us played to a very appreciative audience at a joint celebration of an open day for friends and family and Armed Forces Day.

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
Favourite Words Aloud	Currently on Hold 2nd Wednesday of the Month	10:00	12:00	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