



Exe Valley u3a Website <https://exevalley.u3asite.uk> Facebook [Exe Valley u3a](#)

Exe Valley u3a BACS Details [Sort code 30-99-50; Acc. No. 84072168](#)

National Website <http://www.u3a.org.uk/>

Newsletter 222– July 2026

... this month ...

Wednesday 15th July

2pm Cherith Hall

Two ARK ROYAL'S Twenty Years Apart

Terry Chapman (Exe Valley U3A Member)

Terry Chapman will show how his 33 year Royal Naval career was book ended by tours in 2 ships called ARK ROYAL.

The first was the famous conventional carrier that featured in the 1970's TV series 'Sailor', in which he serviced Sea King helicopters.

The second, after many years, other ships, squadrons and promotions, he was responsible for the air engineering in the VSTOL (Vertical landing short take off) ARK.

Terry will compare life and aircraft in both ships, bring in a local connection and touch upon current RN fixed-wing operating 'toys'.

... next month...

Wednesday 19th August

2pm Cherith Hall

People4Ponies

Faye Stacey

People4Ponies is a pony sanctuary based in Devon specialising in helping wild and traumatised ponies.

As well as being home to ponies that are too traumatised by their experiences of people to find "normal homes", they are very proactive and successful with campaigning work.

News from the Committee

At our most recent committee meeting we spent some time discussing the need to recruit more people to help at the monthly meetings.

Pleasingly attendance is on the increase and an important part of the afternoon is meeting up with old friends, and hopefully making new ones, over a cup of tea afterwards.

However, we are finding ourselves a little short on the tea rota and would like more people to come forward to take a turn with preparing the refreshments and clearing up afterwards.

We would also like to recruit more "meeters and greeters" to welcome people, especially newcomers, as they come through the door.

It can be quite daunting going to somewhere on your own, especially for new people, but a smile and a friendly face will help people to feel welcome and encourage them to come again.

Anne Bush will be happy to hear from you about joining the tea rota and our new volunteer coordinator Karyl Huntley - Sadler will be pleased to speak to you about becoming a "meeter and greeter".

We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

New members

There is just one new member this last month, **Margaret Cuningham**. We hope you enjoy your time with us.

Welfare Officer

Marilyn Dawson

Marilyn prefers to be contacted by email. If you know of anyone who is ill or has been admitted to hospital, or anyone who has a special anniversary to celebrate, please email Marilyn with details and she will send a card on our behalf. We will also add an item to the monthly committee agenda so that Marilyn can let the committee know via the secretary if she has sent anyone a card. It would also be helpful if group leaders could keep Marilyn informed of anyone in their group who they think should receive such a card.

Newsletter

August's Newsletter will be compiled by Lynne Lyddon. Please send your reports to Lynne by **9am Friday 14th August**. Thank you.

News from the Interest Groups

Art Appreciation – Gina Brown, Keith Bush, John Massey

Instead of a formal meeting in June we went on a group visit to the Museum of Somerset in Taunton to see the exhibition *A Life in Art* featuring paintings by the Bloomsbury Group artist Roger Fry and his wife Helen Coombe.



Fry started out as a scholar and art critic. He initially specialised in Italian old masters but, just before the First World War, became instrumental in introducing recent modern artists such as Manet, Cézanne, Gauguin, van Gogh and Matisse to the British art public. He coined the term *Post-Impressionist* to describe them. At first people thought him a charlatan, even insane, but they were gradually won over. Kenneth Clarke later called him “*the greatest influence on taste since Ruskin in so far as taste can be changed by one man, it was changed by Roger Fry*”.

It's fair to say that on the whole we found Fry's paintings (landscapes, portraits and self portraits - his 1925 self-portrait is shown here) interesting rather than spectacular, and largely derivative of the styles of the French painters whose champion he had become.

The small selection of works by Helen Coombe consisted of some attractive watercolours of Italian and other locations.

Our next meeting will be at the **OHSCC on Thursday 16 July at 2pm**, at which we will be sharing images on the theme 'Faces'.

New group members are always welcome.

Boules

Tuesday Boules – Janet Phythian

Thursday Boules – Jill Riddiford

Such an adaptable team we are proving to be as we have proved we can play whatever the weather throws at us. We did start at 9.30am one Thursday instead of 10am in the last heatwave and so managed half a session. One team even scored 8 for one end, nearly broke the scoreboard! Needless to say, still a lot of fun.

Bridge

Tuesday Bridge – Doreen Burton

The Tuesday Bridge group play online at 7.30pm most weeks. We also meet to play on Wednesday afternoons to include those in the group that prefer not to play online. Our Wednesday session is now full but we would welcome anyone that would like to play online on a Tuesday evening. We play 'Bridge Base Online'.

Thursday Social Bridge – Tricia Summers

The group continues to play on Thursday afternoons. We play bridge in a friendly social setting while trying to improve our skills. Each week the cards provide varying challenges both in bidding and play.

Canasta – Sue Dark

This Group meets on the **2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month** in each other's homes.

Craft – Elaine Wright

We meet at **2pm on Monday 13th July** at Lynne's for more 'Tea Bag Folding' and 'Prick and Stitch'.

Cribbage – Keith Dawson

Our normal routine is to play on the **2nd and 4th Monday afternoon each month**.

Discussion – Marilyn Dawson

We met on a beautiful sunny morning to talk about the possibility of a settlement on the moon. After the success of the recent Artemis 2 mission to the moon, it is very likely that there will be a scientific settlement in 10 years time, despite the many difficulties of getting equipment and supplies there. Astronauts based there will have to live underground due to the extremes of temperature and face many other difficulties. The cost of the Artemis mission so far is approximately \$100 billion and some believe this could be used for improve things on earth. Another concern is that space exploration is controlled by a few countries and even though there may be many scientific benefits, would they be shared?

On a lighter subject we talked about our favourite clothes to wear. The main thing was comfort, especially in hot weather with a loose dress or shorts and tee shirts popular. Elastic waists on joggers and sweatshirts were a choice for winter.

Our next get together is on **Friday 7 August at 10.15** at the usual venue.

Folk Dancing – John & Hazel Ridd (Tiverton u3a)

This group meets on the **2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month, 2pm – 4pm in Halberton Village Hall**. All are welcome. The dances are walked through and explained well, and everyone is very friendly and helpful to ensure we all have a lovely time.

French Conversation – Deborah Lal

We gathered at Joan's home for our June meeting, which in view of members' various other commitments was held in the afternoon of Friday July 3rd!

After an initial brief chat we read an article from a past GCSE exam reading comprehension paper and answered the questions that followed, translating it in the process. Then, as a listening practice, I read aloud a more complicated text about a holiday in France, and asked the group in English for details of what was being described. This is of course more difficult without seeing a printed copy of the extract, but everyone participated very well and we collected some new vocabulary along the way.

Thank you, Joan, for the lovely tea and cake.

Our July session will be on **Friday July 24th**, to avoid the bank holiday weekend. Jenny has kindly offered to host us.

Gardening – Joan Kelly, Jo Jeffrey, Carol Powney

The very hot weather is proving to be rather challenging for gardeners. We all want to keep our plants happy and hydrated but the water butts are drained and carrying heavy watering cans can be quite tiring. We hope a hosepipe ban will not be introduced in our area. However,

we must also remember to keep water available for the birds and other wildlife.

Next month we have no arranged meeting, but a reminder this month we visit Burrow Farm Gardens, Dalwood Road, Axminster EX13 7ET. Meeting there **Friday 17th July 1.30pm.**



Local History – David Meredith

A great shame that the heatwave limited numbers at our July meeting and a lively presentation by Exeter Redcoat Guide, Jon Bell. Many and varied were the life stories of famous and infamous people who ended their days in Exeter. The city was famous for its Catacombs offering cheap burials on lower ground and expensive resting places inside. Visits can be made through guided tours.

Haldon Hill was the scene of the last duel in the country and an Exeter theatre saw the largest loss of lives ever from a fire.

We were treated to a visual journey around the city with songs and rap written by Jon himself.

"Burning Of The Exeter Theatre" by William McGonagall

"'Twas in the year of 1887, which many people will long remember,
The burning of the Theatre at Exeter on the 5th of September,
Alas! that ever-to-be-remembered and unlucky night,
When one hundred and fifty lost their lives, a most agonising sight.

The play on this night was called "Romany Rye,"
And at act four, scene third, Fire! Fire! was the cry;
And all in a moment flames were seen issuing from the stage,
Then the women screamed frantically, like wild beasts in a cage."

Next month we go 'on the road' to West Middlewick Farm Shop near Nomansland on **Thursday August 13th** (and not the 14th). Arrive for 2pm in the Hayloft Cafe for a talk by the owners on the history of the Farm which has been feeding Devon for 60 years. Treat yourself to tea, cake etc and look around the shop selling a range of items including their speciality of raw milk and seasonal produce.

Please contact me for further details and to book a limited number of places. Please be aware there are steep stairs up to the cafe. Good level parking and glorious Devon views.

For our September second Thursday meeting at the Cherith, we hope to hear a talk by Todd Gray. Further details soon.

Lunch Club – Wendy Cook

We met this month as a group of ten for lunch at the Al Dente Italian restaurant in the High Street at Cullompton. There is an extensive choice of main courses, including gluten free and vegetarian options, and the service was very good. They now offer a set lunch menu in addition to the a la carte dishes, which provides excellent value to those wanting a main course and a dessert. The food was delicious, as proven by the resulting array of empty plates, and we all found it a very pleasant experience.

July's lunch will be at the **Butterleigh Inn, Thursday 16th at 12.30pm.**

Mah Jong – Heather Edwards

We meet on the **first Friday of the month**, playing simple Mah Jong i.e. clean and dirty hands. Currently our list is full but you're welcome to join our waiting list.

MOTO (Members On Their Own) – Wendy Cook

If you are on your own and would like to meet up with other in the same situation, then come along to our coffee morning. We meet once a month on the fourth Saturday at the Flying Pickle in Tiverton, where the chat is lively and the coffee hot. We also arrange lunches and other outings to the cinema or walks in our lovely countryside. If you are interested in coming along, please contact Wendy Cook.

Our next coffee morning will be on **Saturday 22nd August at 10.30 at the Flying Pickle**, Tiverton. Please note that the July coffee morning has been cancelled due to the Mid Devon Show and other members commitments.

Poetry – Tim Dyke

Our June theme was clothing – an ironic choice on what proved to be the hottest day of the year. But almost all members bravely sallied forth with a really eclectic collection, ranging from Chaucer's Knight, betrayed as a mercenary by his "bismotered" clothing, to Hawaiian Cathy Song's Girl Powdering Her Neck, reflecting on the beautiful painting attached.



Ted Hughes remembered Sylvia's Pink Wool Knitted Dress on their wedding day (extraordinarily recreated here by ChatGPT), while AA Milne took us all back to our childhoods with John's Great Big Waterproof Boots.



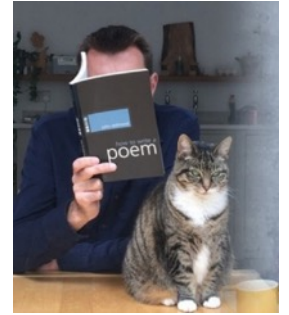
James Galvin described the Sadness of Wedding Dresses only worn once but kept forever – except for those incinerated by deceived brides. Kirsty MacColl lamented how In These Shoes she was rarely appropriately shod, but Janice Mirikitani observed a mother painstakingly embroidering her daughter's wedding slippers.



Less comfortable was Asma Unpacks Her Pretty Clothes by Clive James, contrasting Assad's wife's gorgeous clothing with the appalling tortures her husband inflicted on the Syrians.

Jonathan Swift amazed but disgusted us with his description of A Beautiful Young Nymph Going To Bed, divesting herself even of fake eyebrows, glass eye and false teeth, but Pablo Neruda celebrated a pair of socks knitted just for him.

We could not of course ignore the Kinks' Dedicated Follower of Fashion, but high spot of the afternoon had to be Douglas's own poem of how he now uses his wife's old silk dress to whet his scythe.



Finally, we went away chuckling at Brian Bilston's Coquet:

i put down my Guardian, remove my cardigan, / other clothes follow / slowly, sliding seductively / to the floor. / i'm a snake shedding its skin. / peeling. / revealing. / on the hunt. / for some healing. / garments slip. / i bite my lip. / in anticipation. / of emancipation.

But then the doctor turns around and says, "You can keep your underpants on, Mr Bilston."

We meet again at **2 on July 23rd at Tim's**, to stir together poems on Food and Cooking. Sorry, no vacancies.

Rambling – Pat McGee

We had a gorgeous day on Thursday for our walk, which started at Stantyway Farm where they have a pop up cafe and an honesty box. We proceeded down the lane by the football field towards Monks Thatch this took us down through a gate where we all stood to admire the beautiful coastline of Ladram Bay. We walked down the field to join the King Charles 111 coastal path towards Brandy Head where we stopped for a rest. This was the site of a top-secret World War 11 R A F Gunnery research unit (opened in 1940 - 1944). Historically 17th and 18th centuries Brandy Head's remote cliffs was a drop off point for smugglers. It's now been restored into 2 holiday lets.



We carried on following the coastal path and admiring the views towards Budleigh Salterton - all made easier by the lovely breeze. We got back to the Otter Nature Reserve where we walked along back to Otterton, where we had a lovely lunch.

Reading

Reading Group 1 – Alison Rice

We all felt we'd read *Far from the Madding Crowd* in earlier days and certainly remembered film versions we'd seen. For those of us of a certain age, it was the glamorous production of the Sixties starring Julie Christie, Alan Bates and Terence Stamp.

So how did the book stand up to our re-reading? Certainly the least tragic of Hardy's novels, we all appreciated his rich descriptions of the beauty and hardships of rural life in Wessex at the time.

Written in 1874 it was published in 12 monthly episodes in the Cornhill Magazine. This popular magazine was edited by Leslie Stephen, Virginia Woolf's father and attracted well-known authors. It seems Hardy was anxious to impress and included in his work many classical, often obscure, references which we found difficult and were grateful, for the accompanying notes - although not always inclined to consult them. In the novel Hardy also often launches into rambling paragraphs that we found difficult to follow and often tedious.

Hardy's representation of women's lives in Victorian times is deeply misogynistic. Bathsheba Everdene is portrayed initially as strong and determined, but her actions become those of female frailty - bad judgement, hysteria and flightiness. Good old Gabriel (Guardian Angel) Oak (strong and unwavering), a perfect model of masculinity.

The novel hinges round a series of pivotal moments of dilemma and which must have left the readers of Cornhill Magazine eager for the next issue. It made us think of modern-day soap operas; we could almost hear the theme tunes of *The Archers* or *East Enders* as we anticipated the outcomes of a dramatic scene. Hardy even has his comical group of Wessex yokels - (aka the Grundys of the Archers) - which we all felt were a welcome addition to the novel.

We meet next on **July 27th at 2.30 at Alison's.**

Reading Group 2 – Heather Peters

Our book for this month was *Before The War*, by Fay Weldon.

Set in the 1930s amongst the upper classes this was, we all agreed, a most peculiar book - invited to think of one word to describe it, we contributed "pointless", "bizarre", "pretentious", "convoluted", "odd", "yawn" and "unreadable" - from which you'll gather that not everybody finished it.

The writing style includes direct comments from the author on the characters and the direction the plot was taking, including very early on the information that one of the principal characters was to die following the birth of twins, along with many other "spoilers" and explanations, some deliberately misleading. The author shows an obsession with appearance, caricaturing her characters according to their looks and lampooning the unbeautiful. Apparently these two elements are recurring themes in her books and on the strength of it none of us would seek out any other of her novels.

After some very lively discussion on the plot's many twists and turns - some of which were extremely obscure - we were looking forward to the usual tea and biscuits when our host Jenny surprised us with a beautiful home-made chocolate cake to celebrate her imminent birthday - thank you, Jenny, we wish you a very happy birthday!

Our next meeting is at **Heather's on 22 July** to discuss our next book, *A Ladder to the Sky* by *John Boyne*.

Reading Group 3 – Vicki Bristow

Tuesday Skittles – Kathy Senior Thursday Skittles – Jill Riddiford

In hibernation until the autumn.

What We Have Noticed – Chris & Gina Brown

We meet again on **Tuesday July 14th at 10.30.**

Wine Appreciation Group – Helen White, Deborah Lal

On a very hot evening nine of us met at David's for our July tasting where he presented three wines. He had recently travelled along the River Danube and had chosen a white wine from the Neszmely region, in NW Hungary for us to taste. The famous wine from this region is Tokaj Aszu, but, as he had been unable to find one, he bought one simply named "**Pinot Grigio**". This dry, crisp wine with fruity notes of apple and honey was purchased in Lidl at just £5.19 and 11% volume. We agreed it was a good choice for a warm summer evening and excellent value for money. The second wine David poured for us was a red that we soon guessed was a Merlot. This "**Californian Merlot**" was again from Lidl – a full bodied, smooth wine, with tastes of ripe fruit and spicy oak. This wine was very popular with the group and at £5.49 excellent value, 13% volume. Lastly we moved to France for our final tasting. The owner of the vineyard, Elan Fayard, learnt her trade in the Napa Valley in California before moving to grow her own grapes in Provence in 2007 with the intention of making 'wines with identity'. "**Azur Touch Mediteranee Rose**" was light with flavours of peach and floral notes. One member remarked that she didn't normally go for rose wines, but this was the best one she'd had. Again from Lidl 12.5% vol and £6.99.

We meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 7pm, but in August are holding our annual barbecue so our next official meeting will be on **Wednesday 9th September**, venue to be confirmed.

Please speak to Helen or Deborah if you would like to know more about this friendly group or if you'd like to come along for a taster session.



World History – Helen Booth

The speaker at our June meeting was Dave Harvey who told us about Mountain Men, frontiersmen and fur trappers who explored the North American wilderness, particularly in the

Rocky Mountains, between 1800 and 1890. Using their wealth of local knowledge and experience battling hostile conditions, they mapped unknown territory, established trading posts, and opened up routes through the mountains thus enabling the passage of thousands of pioneers on their journeys towards Oregon and California. And we heard that all those tassels on their buckskins weren't just for decoration. They had vital survival functions, acting like wicks to draw rain away from the body, providing emergency cordage, breaking up the human silhouette while hunting, and preventing raw seams from unravelling. Men such as Jim Bridger, Kit Carson and Hugh Glass (portrayed by Leonardo DiCaprio in the movie 'The Revenant') are entwined with American Western history.



We stay on the same continent for our next topic as on **Monday July 20th, as usual 2pm, Room 2, OHSCC**, Jill Aldrich will tell us about Harriet Tubman, 1822–1913. After escaping slavery herself, Harriet made many missions to help others escape using the network of the 'Underground Railway'. During the American Civil War she served as a scout and spy for the Union Army and in her later years was an activist in the women's suffrage movement. Today she is one of American history's most famous figures.

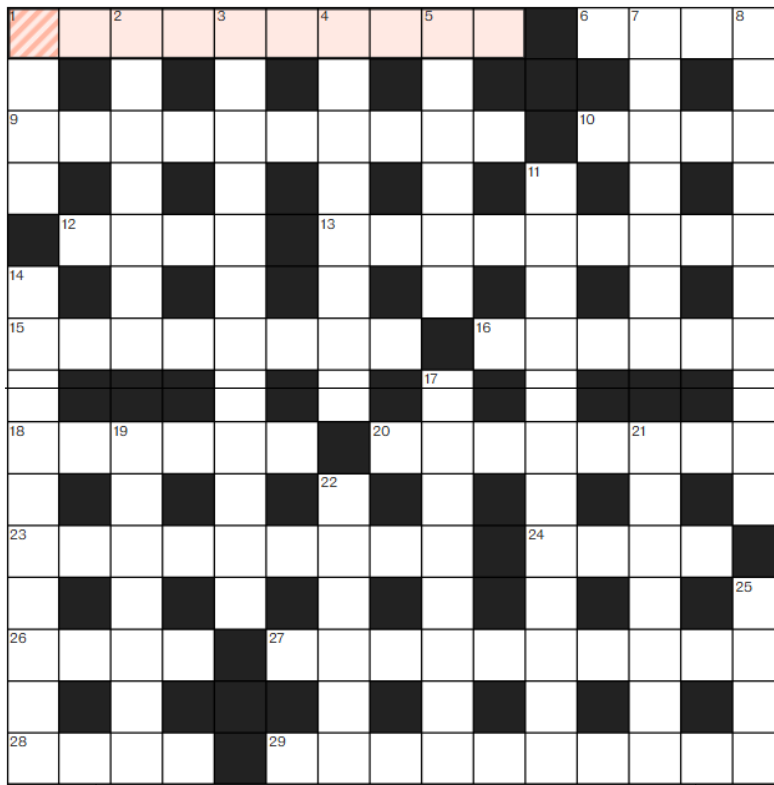
COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair	Mike Turner	01884 861053
Vice-Chair	Karyl Huntley-Sadler	
Secretary	Carol Langley	
Treasurer	Paul Sadler	
Programme Coordinator	John Langley	
Beacon Administrator	Jo Jeffrey	
Membership Secretary	Jill Riddiford	01884 258091
Group Co-ordinator	Joan Kelly	
Minutes Secretary	Jo Jeffrey	
Social Organiser	Anne Bush	
Monthly Meeting Organiser	Anne Bush	
Website Manager	Paul Sadler	
Deputy Treasurer	Karyl Huntley-Sadler	
Committee member	Deborah Lal	

NON-COMMITTEE

Printer / IT	Carol Boote and Ray McIntosh
Newsletter Editor	Lynne Lyddon
Welfare Officer	Marilyn Dawson
PA / Technician	Tim Dyke

Cryptic Crossword



Across

- 1 Youngsters are said to be spending too much time on this (10)
- 6 Returning macs, is it a con? (4)
- 9 Muddled statesmen's financial assessment (5,5)
- 10 Song of the deep from this fish (4)
- 12 Granary is changed & initially left open (4)
- 13 Heavenly drink found in eastern fruit (9)
- 15 Flight in Greece contains illumination (8)
- 16 Trompe is deceiving for the time being (3,3)
- 18 She's lost them and doesn't know where to find them! (2-4)
- 20 Rigid Ron is laid out in a rectangular form (4,4)
- 23 Cloth on itchy skin makes baby sore (5,4)
- 24 Initially only a tiny hint but really a commitment (4)
- 26 A little bit of aggro will get bigger (4)
- 27 Can't weigh ingredients here listed (3,7)
- 28 It's puzzling: nothing, it seems, for a vegetarian! (4)
- 29 Only a rich fashionista perhaps. That's fortunate (4,2,4)

Down

- 1 Wrestle with final result plus zero (4)
- 2 To discover if the loaf is "grained" you should be doing this (7)
- 3 Beauty that doesn't strain one's sight! (4,2,3,3)
- 4 Reg and Nan in Physical Training initially to get in the club (8)
- 5 A small nail and tango puts you on the offensive (6)
- 7 An oat-rich cooked meal can take Romans into battle (7)
- 8 Do they plan to be a quiz winner? (10)
- 11 Just Latin-lipped lackeys, these Cockney dogs (12)
- 14 Air travel after dark can be unreliable (3,2,5)
- 17 Forbid professional originally hot in bath in Totnes (8)
- 19 Schmaltz after Dad enjoys this in the cinema (7)
- 21 Following Royal Engineers presents problems with Unite (7)
- 22 A malady seen in everyman fluffing (3,3)
- 25 Do this before you lead out the card game (4)

(Solution below)

S	C	R	E	E	N	P	L	A	Y		S		C	A	M
U		E		A	R	R	T						H		A
M	E	A	N	S	T	E	S	T	S			B	A	S	S
O		D		Y	G		A		L			R			T
	S	I	L	O			E	C	T	A	R	I	N	E	
F		N		N		A		K		B		O		R	
L	I	G	H	T	I	N	G		P		A				I
Y				H		T			P		A				I
B	O	P	E	E	P		G	R	I	D	I	R	O	N	
Y		O		E		M		O		O		E		D	
N	A	P	P	Y	R	A	S	H	O		A	T	H		
I		C		E		N		I	D	D	I				D
G	R	O	W		O	F	F	B	A	L	A	N	C	E	
H		R			L			I	E		U			A	
T	U	N	A			J	U	S	T	A	S	W	E	L	L