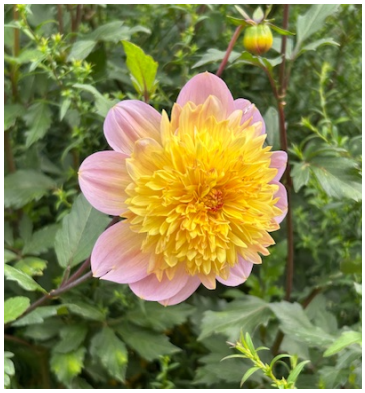


u3a exe valley

learn, laugh, live



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 225 – October 2026

****

… this month …

Wednesday 21st October

2pm Cherith Hall

Inn and Out at the Top

Neil Hanson – Author

Neil owned Britain's highest Inn in a wild and remote corner of the Yorkshire Dales. A laugh a minute tour of the quirks, highs and lows of running Britain's Highest Inn.

****

… next month…

Wednesday 18th November

2pm Cherith Hall

The Battle of Britain

Brian Fearnley with Brian Lane-Smith

(from the South West Airfields Heritage Trust)

The South West Airfields Heritage Trust or SWAHT was founded in 2003 and their object and passion is to educate people about aviation history in the South West of England and in particular those events that happened during the Second World War.

****

News from the Committee

The committee didn't meet this month, so no news from them.

****

New members

There are no new members this month.

****

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

October's Newsletter will be compiled by Lynne Lyddon. Please send your reports to Lynne by **9am Friday 13th November.** Thank you.

****

u3a Boat Trip

On a sunny Monday in September, 20 Exe valley u3a members joined a Blake's coach trip to Exmouth, where we boarded the boat that took us up the estuary of the river Exe and later onto the Exeter ship canal arriving 2.5 hours later at Exeter Quay. It was slow and relaxing but it had some interesting moments going through locks and swing bridges which were pre-booked with the local council as they hold up the traffic and only happen about 6 times a year when the tides and conditions are right. After arriving at Exeter quays we had a couple of hours to have lunch and a look about then the coach picked us up and we were home in time for tea.











****

News from the Interest Groups

Art Appreciation – Gina Brown, Keith Bush, John Massey

At our September meeting we shared images on the theme 'Myths and Legends'.

We didn't debate the no doubt subtle difference between a myth and a legend, we just dived straight in. We largely focused on the Greek myths of Circe, Oedipus, Orpheus, Pandora, and Europa and the bull, but also included Norse gods and Australian aboriginal myths of the Dreamtime. Our legends included King Arthur, St George and the dragon, the sacrifice of the Swedish king Domalde, and the exploits of Amir Hamza (uncle of the Prophet Muhammad).



The artists included Corot, Ingres, Moreau, Raphael, Rossetti, Rubens, Uccello, Ern Brooks, Frida Kahlo, Carl Larsson, Alberto Savinio and John William Waterhouse.

Shown here is Rossetti's 1871 picture, *Pandora*, the ills and troubles of this world seeping out of her casket in a sort of orange mist.

Our next meeting will be at the **OHSCC on Thursday 15 October at 2pm** at which Keith will be giving us a talk on the Czech artist of the Art Nouveau period, Alphonse Mucha.

New group members are always welcome.

Boules

Tuesday Boules – Janet Phythian

Thursday Boules – Jill Riddiford

We finished our 2026 Summer season at the end of September and are now in hibernation until next Spring.

Bridge

Wednesday Bridge – Doreen Burton

We continue to meet at members' houses where we enjoy a friendly game of Bridge from 2 - 4.30 pm with a break halfway through for tea, biscuits and chat. It is always a very enjoyable afternoon.

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

September meeting

A group of 8 members met at Halberton Village Hall to have a go at making clay Christmas decorations. The afternoon was ably led by a local ceramics maker who was very informative.

We all made 3 decorations, varying from baubles & snowmen to Christmas trees and stockings. Our clay had already been prepared and rolled ready for us to start. The different clay colours and their uses were explained to us. The whole process took a lot of care, time





and patience to design a ceramic that we thought would be pleasing to the eye once fired. We will not know exactly how our designs have fared until they have been fired in the kiln at extreme temperatures, but you can see how they looked when we handed them over in the photos shown.

We all had an enjoyable afternoon and are all looking forward to seeing the fruit of our labours soon.

October Meeting

A large group of us met in October to make tasselled key rings. We were ably led by Steph who patiently guided us through all the necessary stages: some more complex than others.

There were several moments of quiet, deep concentration and plenty of talking and laughing too. We were all very proud of our finished article as you can see from the photo. Thanks to Steph for hosting and making a delicious sponge that was enjoyed with our tea!



Our next meeting is on **November 9th at Anne's house** with Vicky leading on making bookmarks.

Cribbage – Keith Dawson

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

Discussion – Marilyn Dawson

Nuclear Power is a perfect baseline to support demand for electricity for the national grid. It is complementary to weather dependant renewable energies such as solar power and wind turbines.

In August we had 2 instances of power outages. These affected rail services. This took days to get back to normal services. Unexpected loss of power can cause chaos.

We had a long hot summer. If this continues in future years, we will possibly have to adopt a mediterranean lifestyle. To the avoid the main heat of the day.

We ended on the topic of spiders and conkers. Do conkers discourage spiders in the home?

Our next meeting is on Friday 6th November 2026

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

Gardening – Joan Kelly, Jo Jeffrey, Carol Powney

Last month we visited Cadhay Gardens near Ottery St Mary. There was another u3a there visiting from Torbay so initially a bit of confusion as they had booked a tour of the house as well as the gardens. The weather was idyllic and we were able to wander at leisure through the walled garden which is laid out to allotments full of homegrown vegetables plus fruit trees.

The gardens surrounding the house, a Tudor Manor House built in 1550, are beautiful with Medieval fishponds, mature trees and colourful borders, featuring in particular a huge array of dahlias flowering at this time of year. There are several seating areas to sit, relax and enjoy the tranquil surroundings.











This month we booked a trip with Upton Coaches travelling first to The Hare and Hounds at Putts Corner near Sidbury, where we enjoyed an excellent carvery lunch, followed by a visit to Otter Nurseries at Ottery St Mary.

Next month we plan to visit Monkton Elm Garden Centre, Monkton Heathfield, Taunton TA2 8QN. Meeting there **Monday 9th November 2pm.**

Local History – David Meredith

"An audience with the Lady Katherine" was a professional presentation to group members by Devon author Rosemary Griggs, ably assisted by her 'peasant' husband David. Appearing in full Tudor costume as Lady Katherine Champernowne, she delighted us all with details of her

daily life, large family and royal connections which included Princess Katherine, Countess of Devon, who lived out her last years at Tiverton Castle and was buried in St Peter's Church.

She also explained and demonstrated the extensive layers of clothing which made up her wardrobe, all hand made by herself, including the peasant's woolly hat. We all now know what a farthingale was! - and the reason for wearing a ruff. The talk gave us a wonderful look into life in Tudor Devon and as Maggie said in her vote of thanks, made the meeting "a highlight of the year."

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday November 12th 2026 at 2pm** at the Cherith Hall. Terry Chapman, who is taking over as group leader from January 2027, will give a talk on; **"Ben Tillett: The Royal Navy Trained Bristolian who Unionised the Unskilled'.**

Terry adds**, "**He is an important, if largely unacknowledged, figure in the early years of the Labour Movement in this Country and I will try to show how an impoverished background and Victorian Royal Navy training led to a colourful political, and personal, life.

Coming from a navy background himself, do come along and get to meet and know Terry and hear Ben Tillett's amazing personal story.

Doors open from 1.30pm Admission £2 to include refreshments.

Lunch Club – Wendy Cook

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 others 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 24th October at 10.30 at the Flying Pickle, Tiverton.**

Poetry – Tim Dyke





Since we lost our August meeting to the leader's jury service, our theme of the Law had seemed a natural topic in September, but what was surprising was the level of anger and fear this theme had engendered in our poets, from Heaney's childish terror of the authorities in A Constable Calls, or his anguish over the discovery in the Irish bog of a punished adulteress, to the fury of Justice Denied In Massachusetts by Edna St. Vincent Millay at the unjust execution of Saccho and Vanzetti in 1927.

There was comedy too, often from the bewilderment of the common people at legal language and practices, and how lawyers

are able to depict the accused as both victim and perpetrator simultaneously, Lawyer Wainwright Harrumphed and Rose to his Feet by Jerome Malenfant was a delightful example, though we also enjoyed some songs on the topic, from Here Comes The Judge to Good Morning Judge.



There was also a wide variety of forms in our selections, from the strange Blackout poems by which modern writers create a new work by blacking out words in an original, to the stately iambic pentameter of Milton's Paradise Lost, and the sad meditation of the marvellously-named Chidiock Tichborne, (pictured left) writing in the Tower in the night before his execution.



From howls of protest at injustice to wry satire of the judicial system, the group once again demonstrated a remarkable ability to find unusual perspectives on a theme, though 10cc's Rubber Bullets was perhaps even more unusual than most.

We meet again on **October 22nd at Tim's,** to share poems on Age, from cradle to grave.

Rambling – Pat McGee

Reading

Reading Group 1 – Alison Rice

Normal People by Sally Rooney was published in 2018 quickly becoming a best seller. It follows the developing, complex friendship and relationship between two teenagers, Connell and Marianne, who go to the same school in County Sligo and later to Trinity College, Dublin. Connell is popular, handsome and highly intelligent. Marianne is also highly intelligent but is a social outcast at school. Connell's mother is warm and loving and works as a housecleaner for Marianne's mother who is, in contrast, cold and emotionally abusive towards Marianne. She ignores the physical and mental abuse Marianne endures from her brother.

Connell and Marianne are attracted to each other and begin a sexual relationship which is intensified by their mutual love of literature. During the years that follow they drift apart and reunite, Rooney introducing other students, other relationships and the challenges which face the young people as they move from school and home to university and independence.
Our group's thoughts on the book varied hugely. While some found it a moving account of young relationships, the author's sparse way of recounting events leaving the reader to discover their own feelings about them; others found her style too flat. Some found the frequent on/off on/off romance of Connell and Marianne irritating while others thought that it reflected the development of young personalities.

The book explores the effect of socio-economic differences in relationships and does have undercurrents of abuse and masochism: there is probable incest and paedophilia in there too but these are not explicit.

We of course talked about the sexual freedom enjoyed by these young people in the 2010s compared with that of our own student days in the 1960s before the advent of the Pill. In the end we agreed that everyone is 'Normal'!

We meet next month on 26 October at the Hills' to exchange thoughts on another book about young people, *Eligible* by Curtis Sittenfeld.

Reading Group 2 – Heather Peters

We met at Marilyn's to discuss Niall Williams' *The Time of the Child.* Set in rural County Clare in the 1960s in a village whose overarching authority is the Catholic Church, in which every aspect of life is steeped, this is one of several of Williams' books set in the fictional village of Faha following the stories of different members of the close-knit but undemonstrative community. The extraordinary poetic richness of Williams' prose prompted even more discussion than usual; most of us really enjoyed this but the fullness wasn't without criticism in some quarters as the book certainly employs a great many words for each small advance of the plot, and we all noted that the main event - the finding of an abandoned newborn in the churchyard days before Christmas - didn't happen until halfway through the book. Williams' characterisation is extraordinary but clearly the detail is not for everyone. Despite one member not finishing it, a couple of others finding it far too verbose, and one feeling it was depressing owing to the extreme poverty of life at that time in that setting, the remainder found much to enjoy.

We noted that on BBC Sounds can be found a story which Niall Williams was commissioned to write, entitled *O Now* - it's a delightful, lightly comical story about two Faha characters whom we met in *The Time of the Child* and would be an excellent introduction to the author. It comes in five fifteen-minute episodes, is narrated by Dermot Crowley in a glorious soft Irish brogue, and is very highly recommended indeed.

Our discussion next month is at Heather's, and we'll be talking about *The Cut Throat Trial* by The Secret Barrister, writing as S J Fleet.

Reading Group 3 – Vicki Bristow

Tuesday Skittles – Kathy Senior

Thursday Skittles – Jill Riddiford

Our autumn/winter season started at the beginning of October, some very varied scores as ever, but plenty of enjoyment. We meet every Thursday at 10am at the Half Moon. Although the group is full at present I am happy to start a waiting list if anyone wants to join us.

What We Have Noticed – Chris & Gina Brown

Wine Appreciation Group – Helen White, Deborah Lal

This month we met at Wendy's to taste her choice of three wines, all of which were from Tesco. The first was *"Oxford Landing"* a Sauvignon Blanc grown in South Australia's Riverland. Wendy described the imposing red landscape and the beautiful Murray River running through it where the grape is grown. The wine makers were very proud to announce their new partnership with The British and Irish Lions Rugby Union Team, a collaboration that aligns

two brands known for their commitment to heritage and community values. We tasted fresh, zesty flavours, and passion fruit, citrus and papaya. 10.5% vol and £7.50 with the clubcard. We discovered the theme of the evening when Wendy brought out the next bottle a Blush Rose Sauvignon Blanc. *"Mad Fish"* was a dryer wine this time from Western Australia. Cooled by coastal breezes, this wine displays vibrant aromas of passion fruit with delicate red berry flavours & a crisp, refreshing finish. Wendy told us that the family have been making MadFish wines since 1993. Their wines are named after Madfish Bay, a peaceful & remote beach where the pure, white sands meet the Southern Ocean and highly regarded locally and internationally and classed among the best wineries in Margaret River. £10 and 11% vol. Our final wine shouldn't have been a surprise to us and was a Cabernet Sauvignon, aged in oak. The producers work side-by-side with 400 of California's finest grape growers to earn the first pick of their harvest. The wine is tasted over 100 times before it is poured into our first glass! The result? A bold Cabernet Sauvignon with notes of plum, a hint of oak, and a smooth finish. 14.5% vol and £9.

Next month we will have a themed evening at Jane and Peter's, when Deborah and Helen will choose the wines and bring food from that same country to accompany them.

We meet on the **second Wednesday of the month at 7pm, the next being 11 November.** Our group does have places so, please speak to Helen or Deborah if you would like to know more about us or if you'd like to come along for a taster session to see if you'd like to join.

World History – Helen Booth



We heard about more recent history at our September meeting when Dave Harvey's topic was 'The Falklands War'. Although in our lifetime, it is surprising how many details of the conflict escape memory especially that we came much closer to defeat than we remember. Operating 8,000 miles from home meant the British Task Force faced severe supply lines and dwindling resources, while the loss of major ships to Argentine air attacks exposed the carrier battle group to devastating potential losses. The question of sovereignty still rumbles on of course. Argentina's claims over the Islas Malvinas are based on geographic proximity and the claim that following its independence in the early 19th century it succeeded Spanish sovereignty over the islands. Britain bases its claim on the first recorded landing in 1690, administration of the islands continuously since 1833, and the right of the islanders to self-determination. In a 2013 referendum, 99.8% of voters chose to remain a British Overseas Territory.

There will be **no meeting in October** so the next will be on **November 16th**, as usual 2pm, Room 2, OHSCC, when Tim Dyke will explain the 'Problem of Palestine', setting it in its historical context up until 1974.

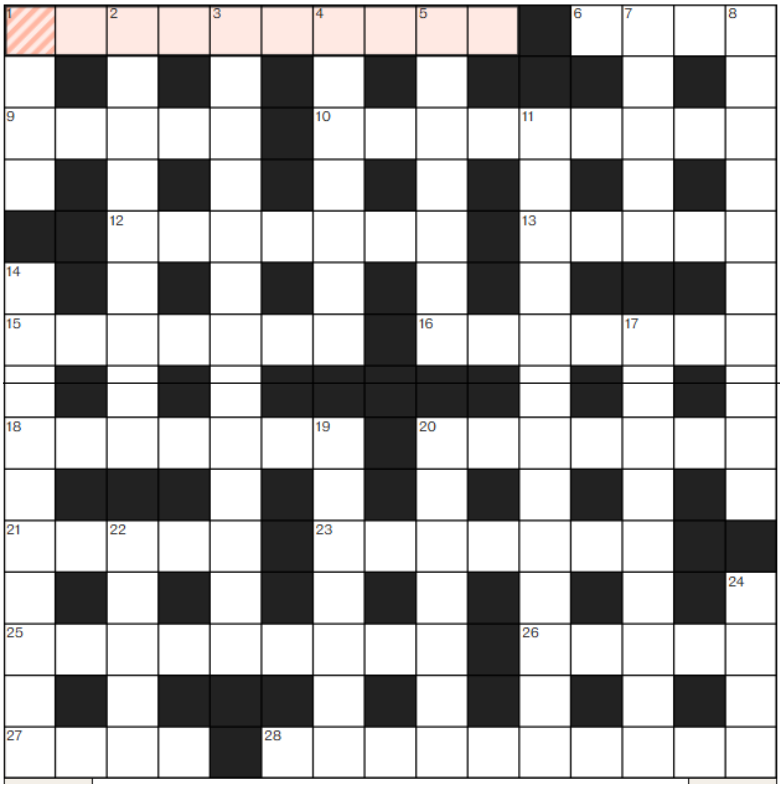
****

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

Cryptic Crossword *(Solution below)*



Across

1 Excellent French food but it maybe a bit sad? (6,4)
6 Birds do it and you can get in one (4)
9 Bug concealed by graph ID tags (5)
10 It may expand after a banquet (9)
12 Flyer, you will find him in Bala via Torquay (7)
13 Champion flower, in the Pakistani mind usurping that of India (5)
15 Implore you to mix cheese with a little butter (7)
16 Alonism can be confused with a curse (7)
18 Those who rally to limit AI's heedless spread (7)
20 Pot, Northern Ireland, & emergency room link up for a saddlebag (7)
21 Penal reform found in S Asian country (5)
23 You can be purple with anger which can turn into aggression with a nudge (7)
25 Berries as a compote in the bistro (9)
26 His name is written in the Myanmar alphabet (5)
27 Such tunes are not odd! (4)
28 He gambled on the whole thing but only a fraction received; his wife was right (6,4)

Down

1 This French puss leads to conversation (4)
2 Claire hears Alan's inside practice (9)
3 Dali loves stew, or is he mixed up and its just a myth? (3,5,5)
4 Put under a spell - need a broomstick to qualify (7)
5 A short poem about two farm animals from the East (7)
7 The young man ringing Inland Revenue is a Scottish landowner (5)
8 Politeness is achieved when peasant mixes with a part of lyrics (10)
11 A miscarriage of justice by chance? (5,3,5)
14 Pour ale in a bomb, that sounds really awful (10)
17 A BSc in tillage included very little of anything (9)
19 Together a short commercial and a poem may not be beneficial (7)
20 Keen to try it out but will complain (7)
22 This tool sounds very ordinary (5)
24 I kept away from the main man in the kitchen (4)


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