Ivybridge u3a learn, laugh, live

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2026

Chairman's Report



This is my first message as Chairman, and it has certainly been a learning curve. I would like to thank the committee and members for their patienc and support as I discover "the u3a way."

Over the past few months, I have seen how much u3a offers – not only the opportunity to learn, but also friendship, companionship and the chance to share interests with others.

Our groups and meetings are especially important in helping us stay connected and avoid the loneliness that can sometimes come with later life.

So, please spread the word about Ivybridge U3A and encourage others in our community to join us.

Learning, friendship and fun, that's what the u3a is all about. Have a wonderful autumn.

Best wishes

Margaret Jones

Registered Charity Number 1178944

CONTACT DETAILS

Email	Ivybridge.u3a@gmail.com
Chairman	07977 905458
Membership Secretary	07780 150750

LOOK OUT FOR US ON FACEBOOK

EXECUTIVE COMITTEE

Hon President	Cliff Bennett
Chairman	Margaret Jones
Vice Chairman	Richard Fee
Treasurer	Christine Smith
Business Secretary	Kim Hill
Minute Taker	Kay Baylis
Membership & Beacon Manager	Ritsaert von Oven
Website Manager & E-mail Monitor	Paul Jones
Speaker Co-ordinator	Andrew Keen
Group Co-ordinator	John Bowditch
Publicity/PR Co-ordinator	Roy Little
Newsletter Editor	Guy Yea
Help Co-ordinator	Sylvia Rutley
	Victor Abbot
	Tom Holway

FORTHCOMING SPEAKERS

18th January — **Growth of Plymouth in medieval times**

An illustrated talk covering Plymouth from its early beginnings, from a Saxon farm through to receiving its charter in 1439.

Alan Bricknell

15th February — **Beyond the dark oceans**

Based on her book, Alison explains the historical facts behind the characters and events of the Huntingford family who emigrated to Canada in 1906.

Alison Huntingford

15th March — **Traditional songs of Devon**

Jim is an award-winning folk singer and musician. With songs and music, he will guide us through the history and flavour of Devon traditional songs.

Jim Causley.

Could You Help Us Move Our Website?

Our website was established during our first year, following the formation of our u3a in 2010. After more than 15 years, we have reached the point where our website needs to be replaced.

The Committee is now looking for a member who would be willing to take on the task of moving our existing site to the central u3a SiteWorks system. This would bring significant benefits to our u3a and provide us with a more modern and sustainable website.

You don't need to be an expert. The SiteWorks team provides plenty of support and guidance to help you create and manage the new site.

If you have an interest in IT and would like to find out more about what would be involved, please contact our current Web Editor **Paul Jones, email ivybridge.u3a@gmail.com.**

Opportunities

I am writing this in the belief that u3a members like to take an opportunity when it is presented to them, after all, we all joined the u3a for various reasons, but we all took an opportunity

I took an opportunity some time ago to connect with the u3a Online Learning Events facility. What is that and what does it do?

The u3a Online Learning Events facility is one of the many things that the u3a makes available to us and it organises online zoom meetings on an interesting variety of subjects. If you register your interest by singing up to receive a newsletter, you will be able to see those subjects and register to attend the meeting. The u3a uses a software programme run by Eventbrite, so you have to also register with them. It may sound complicated but once you have registered it's all easy from that time onwards Here's the link to get you started - https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/educational-events

So, what was it that I watched? A u3a member from Northumberland was presenting information that should be of interest to most of our members. She introduced us to an organisation named AbilityNet. Click on https://abilitynet.org.uk to see what they offer. They have a local representative, Neil Winter who will help with most aspects of connecting to and using online services. Email him at neil.winter@ability.net.org.uk

Lastly have you heard about the u3a Interest Groups Online (IG0)? This is a great opportunity to learn by joining one of the many groups they have. Connect to

https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/learning/interest-groups-online

So, in summary, please take a look at the u3a Online Learning Events facility and enjoy talks on a variety of subjects.

Follow that link to organisation Ability Net and see what they offer – all free.

Go on – take this opportunity! **John Bowditch**

CURRENT GROUPS

ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS
Led by Peter Brooks
Contact 07792 157581

BOOK GROUP
Crime, Murder, Mystery
Led by Val Carmichael
Contact 01752 658164

BRIDGE
Led by Roger Davey
Contact 01752 894703

CANASTA
Led by John Davis
Contact 07484 786058

CHAIR YOGA 1
Led by Sylvia Rutley & Glo Horton
Contact Sylvia 07796 151141
Glo 07947 061625

CHAIR YOGA 2
Led by Debbie Harris-Bowditch
Contact 07862 7499618

CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS
Led by Ian McClure
Contact 01548 830578

CURRENT AFFAIRS
Led by Val Carmichael & Evie Wilson,
Contact Val 01752 658164
or Evie 01752 473479

DARTMOOR DISCOVERY WALKING
Led by John Reynolds
Contact 07857 048801

DARTMOOR HISTORY WALKING
Led by Stephen Woodcock
Contact 01752 691305 or
07739 122374

DAY TRIPS
Led by Rhoda Lloyd
Contact 07443 390043

DRAMA FOR FUN
Led by Ann Laity
Contact 01752 691648

ETYMOLOGY
Group 1 Led by 'B' Naylor
Contact 01752 417315
Group 2 Led by David & Ros Hanley Contact 07779332923

FOLK CLUB
Led by Jan Niezgoda
Contact 01752 896214

FRENCH IMPROVERS
Led by Jill Sampson
Contact 01752 691033

GENERAL DISCUSSION
Led by Roy Little
Contact 07759984777 or
tickerlittle@gmail.com

GEOLOGY
Led by Peter Brooks
Contact 07792 157581

GERMAN CONVERSATION
Led by Gudrun Kitidis
Contact 01752 658735

GUITAR GROUP 1 & 2
Led by Guy Yea
Contact 01752 895590

HISTORY DISCUSSION GROUP
Led by Cheryl Halpin
Contact
corkcutter47@gmail.com

GROUPS cont.

HISTORY OF MODERN BRITAIN
Led by Michael & Maggy Swinson
Contact 01752 698041

LITTER PICKING
Led by Peter & Janet Slootweg
Contact 01752 898534

LOCAL HISTORY
Led by John and Sue Lassan
Contact John 07910 127257 or
Sue 07521 063728

LOOKING AT ART
Led by Sue Nunn
Contact 01752 691467

NATURAL HISTORY
Led by Trudi Bell.
Contact 01752 896937

NEEDLECRAFT (CRAFT)
Led by Keith Mason & Kate Danby
Contact Keith 07779 289462 or Kate
01752 839105

PLAY READING
Led by Michael Fraser
Contact 01752 830430

POETRY APPRECIATION
Led by Kate Danby
Contact katedanby2@gmail.com
01752 839105

QUIZ
Led by Bill McKimm
Contact 07935 292055

READING GROUPS
Group 1 Led by 'B' Naylor
Contact 01752 417315
Group 2 Led by Alison Stobart
Contact 07443 619891

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
Led by Victor Abbott and Liz Rider
Contact Vic on 07757 262919
or Liz 01364 73696

SCRABBLE FOR FUN
Led by Rosemary Cole
Contact 01752 898643

SINGING FOR PLEASURE
Led by Rhoda Lloyd
Contact 07443 390043

THEOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY & PSYCHOLOGY (TPP)
Led by Vanessa Day
Contact 01752 651214

UKELELE
Led by Joy Horwell
Contact 01752 893402

WINE APPRECIATION
Led by Ritsaert von Oven
Contact 07780 150750

WOOD-CARVING
Led by Adam Hart-Davis
Contact 07901 554143

SUPPORTING IVYBRIDGE u3a

We Need Your Support to Spread the Word

If you are reading this then you have already taken the plunge and joined Ivybridge u3a. I hope you are enjoying the groups, the monthly speakers and the camaraderie. I think we are a friendly lot but there are people in our 'catchment areas' who still don't know about us.

People who have recently moved to the area and are finding it difficult or too daunting to make new friends. Others who have just retired and find themselves at a loose end. Perhaps they are recently bereaved and finding it hard to cope with being on their own.

They could even be living next door to you!

If you know someone who might enjoy what we have to offer, please let them know about us and perhaps bring them to a monthly meeting with you to see what we are like. If you belong to a group that you think they may be interested in, check with the Group Leader first and then take them along for a 'taster'.

Another thought for you now.

Have you ever wondered why there isn't a group for something you are keen on? It will be because nobody has put the idea out to the membership to gauge interest and volunteered to get things going. There is lots of help available to set up a group so give it a try.

Kim Hill, Business Secretary

Blow Your Own Trumpet Corner

Have you achieved something you are proud of? Here is the place to let your fellow members know.
We have a published author amongst us (and she may not be the only one).
Jill McRae-Spencer has published her first novel, 'What Kathleen Did', about how Kathleen and her friend Alice came on holiday to Ivybridge in 1929 and what happened afterwards. Available from the library, the Ivybridge Bookshop and Amazon.

Day Trips

On Friday the 17th July, a glorious sunny day, we travelled to Tiverton for a canal boat trip, and a great day was had by all.

We were pulled by George (the horse not the chap in the photo) and it was a lovely sight to see him patiently plodding along in all his harness.

Maybe the best bit was the 2-minute silence on board just hearing the moving water, birds and George clip clopping.

We stopped for a meal at the The Globe in Samford Peverell and were very well looked after there.

Rhoda Lloyd



Proposed Christmas Market Trip.

Thank you to all those that expressed an interest in the coach trip to Exeter. However, I am sorry to say that not enough members have signed up to make it viable.

I am happy to explore other recommended venues.

Rhoda Lloyd

Local History Group

This was the last event for the group but we went out on a high.

Emily Hobhouse was born in 1860 and became a strong humanitarian, welfare and peace activist during the Second Anglo-Boer War.

The museum, in St Ive, Liskeard, opened in 2024. The Rectory, Emily's childhood home until the age of 34, was bought by a philanthropist in 2017 who spent millions of pounds on the restoration. The newly built War Rooms are divided into 17 rooms and we toured the rooms mainly with headsets, but also with VR headsets where we were immersed in the horrors of South African concentration camps.

Emily sought permission to visit the concentration camps where the Boer women and children were incarcerated. She was told she could only go alone. The journey included five days on a train where she was the only woman on board. When she arrived, she was shocked by the impoverished conditions and was determined to ensure the British government was made aware and took action to address the situation. As a result, an official inspection of the camps took place where Emily's report was confirmed. Emily was not mentioned once in their report, even though it was her actions that drew their attention to the squalid conditions.

Emily personally provided aid during and after the war. She taught groups of women how to make lace and provided cattle and ploughs so that people could provide their own food.

Emily died in 1926 in London, aged 66. After her funeral, her ashes were interned and given a State Funeral in Bloemfontein, South Africa. Emily Hobhouse is still well known and revered in South Africa today.

We had lunch in the restaurant which specialises in African food with an English twist, and cakes were also on offer.

This was a unique experience and one the group would recommend to everybody.

Dartmoor Discovery Walking

Dartmoor Discovery Walking Group continues to grow gradually, but there is still room for more without becoming too large.

So now is the opportunity to join a friendly and relaxed group. The walks are not strenuous, with the focus on learning about all aspects of the moor.

Our professional guide is a mine of information about 'all things Dartmoor'.

We meet on the 4th Thursday of the month. Please contact John Reynolds on johnwfreynolds@gmail.com

N.B. if you're intrigued by the contraption in the photo, you'll have to join us to find out what it is!

John Reynolds



Drama for fun

Ivybridge U3A Drama for Fun performed at the last two U3A Christmas Parties, at a local church friendship group and as part of the first Rivers and Moorland Festival. We have worked on sketches, short texts and improvisation but now …..

We are stepping up a gear to perform a one-act play!

Edward Murch's powerful piece "No Name in the Street" concerns events in the first ever Easter week. This is pretty ambitious for us and we are very excited about it!

Performance dates are 19th, 20th and 21st March 2027 - not such a long way off when we meet just once a month. Please "Save the Date" and support us. If you'd like to be in our next play, let us know - no experience necessary…

Ann Laity

Bridge

Concentration while playing Bridge with the u3a at St Austins Priory.



Wine Appreciation

Our wine group has been on its annual September trip abroad. This year we went to Toulouse. This is a delightful city in the SW of France which is famous for 3 things: the red stone from which most of the older buildings were constructed, Airbus (and its shared involvement with Concorde) and finally the best rugby club in the northern hemisphere. It is well worth a visit with beautiful buildings, loads of open space and the grandness of the Garonne River and its bridges.

Michael had found an extraordinary wine tasting at a place called La Degust. The lady owner is the French equivalent of a master of wine and specialises in the wines of the South West. We tasted 5 wines - together with the food for which that region was famous. We drank wine with which we were not familiar, in some cases made from grape varieties of which we had not heard.

We sat down at 12.30hrs for a 2-hour session and finished at 15.45hrs. That was a measure of how much we were enjoying learning and how much she was enjoying a group which was genuinely interested.

We left with a recommendation for a restaurant which specialises in both the wines and the food of the region.

Michael Bailey



Ukelele Group

This year the Ukulele Group had been going from strength to strength - welcoming some new members to our happy band.

We had also provided entertainment for various local groups and care homes.

Sadly, our talented & very patient musical leader Rick died very suddenly which has left all the members devastated and stunned.

However, we all feel that we need to carry on as we are sure Rick would have wished us to do.

We will miss his tuition, dedication & sense of humour.

An extremely hard act to follow!!!

Joy Horwell

Singing for Pleasure

The day the BBC came calling

So, just an ordinary Thursday, a quick cup of coffee before choir; then the telephone rang, “Just to let you know Radio Devon are interviewing two of the girls from the drama group at the Methodist Hall this afternoon I’ve told them the choir will be next door and apparently they’re OK with that”.

Arriving at the hall I had a quick word with the girls and the BBC soundman, and then carried on with the choir, a quick warm up, two songs, then a knock on the door. It was the BBC sound man.

“I've just had a call from my boss. He's travelling around Devon finding out what people are doing for Devon Day.”

Now I can't be the only person who didn't know about Devon Day so, trying to look intelligent, I gave him a knowing nod and he carried on. “He has asked me to record the choir singing.” So, I turned to the choir who were grinning from ear to ear and already rummaging for music they really liked.

We started singing and he walked around recording. We sang our little hearts out and then he left, so we carried on with our normal Thursday afternoon choir. All of a sudden there was another knock at the door.

“I've just had another call from the boss. He will be here in 2 minutes and he wants to do a live interview, and he wants to do it in 3 minutes time said the soundman.

Anne Laity and I looked at each other aghast.

Dear readers, I wish I could tell you that my first thought was all the wonderful things I could say about the Ivybridge u3a. It wasn't! My first thought was ‘I wish I'd put some makeup on’, and the second was ‘I haven't combed my hair for several hours’.

My mother would have been furious.

He came and he recorded, I bumbled through information about the Ivybridge u3a and Anne Laity was very professional talking about the choir, and then he'd gone.

We went back to our ordinary Thursday afternoon with just a little worry about watching ourselves on Spotlight TV that evening.

There is a moral to this tale. Always carry a comb with you. One never knows when a BBC gentleman is going to pop up with a microphone and a camera. (Sorry mum).

Vanessa Day

FURTHER NEWS

Special Members Deal at Unit 8

As we get older most of us lose some of our mobility and muscle strength and many of us wish that we could do something about it.

Many of you may have seen a gym called Unit 8 behind the farm shop and The Rusty Tractor at Endsleigh and imagined that it is full of sweaty Lycra-clad keep-fit types. Downstairs it is a bit like that but upstairs there is a room full of machine-assisted chairs and beds designed for people like us. The system is called Feelgood and it offers a low impact, full body workout which is designed to improve balance, flexibility and muscular strength. There are also a couple of treadmills, a rowing machine, a static cycle and (more importantly?) free tea and coffee. There are also a range of classes and other sessions that are free to members.

I have arranged two sessions where the staff can show you around, demonstrate the machines and offer you refreshments. They are on Tuesday 17th November from 2pm to 4 pm and on Saturday 21st November from 10am to noon.

The really good news is that they are prepared to offer a reduced membership fee of £30 a month (compared with the normal fee of £36) to Ivybridge u3a members on production of a membership card. No further discount for introducing a new member will apply unless, of course, you introduce a non-member in which case the fee drops by £5. Only 30 days notice is needed to cancel membership.

There is free 7-day initial membership so that you can try it out and see if you want to take up full membership. The atmosphere is extremely relaxed and uncompetitive, comfy clothes are all you need and absolutely no pressure is put on you to join.

If you would like to go to one of the introductory sessions, please could you let me know as I wouldn't want them to be overwhelmed by would-be but aging gym-bunnies!

Christine Smith

GROUP DIARY

DAY	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Mon am	Ukulele		Ukulele	Cryptic Crosswords
Mon pm	U3A Committee meeting	Current Affairs	General Monthly Meeting 2.00-4.00pm	Quiz
Tue am	Etymology 2		Reading Group 1 History of Modern Britain	Litter Picking Local History
Tue pm	Bridge	Bridge Crime Book Club Wine Appreciation 6.00-8.00pm	Bridge Play Reading	Bridge Drama
Wed am		History Discussion	Etymology 1	French Improvers Dartmoor History Walking
Wed pm	Canasta	Science & Tech Reading Group 2 Needlecraft	Canasta Folk 7.00-9.00pm	
Thurs am		German Convers Ancient Civilisation Guitar Group 2	Theology Philosophy Psychology	Dartmoor Discovery Walking Guitar Group 2
Thurs pm	Singing for Pleasure	Singing for Pleasure	Singing for Pleasure	Singing for Pleasure Poetry
Fri am	Wood Carving Guitar Group 1	Natural History Litter Picking	Wood Carving Geology Guitar Group 1	Chair Yoga 1&2 General Discussion
Fri pm	Chair Yoga 1&2	Scrabble Chair Yoga 1&2	Chair Yoga 1&2	