

# Ivybridge u3a learn, laugh, live

## NEWSLETTER

**WINTER 2026**



### **Chairperson's report**

I hope you all had a happy and enjoyable Christmas and are now ready to welcome in the New Year with the Ivybridge u3a.

In October the Committee welcomed a new business secretary, Kim Hill, who is making a grand job of organising us all. One of our initial objectives of the New Year is to work towards changing the constitution of the Ivybridge u3a, which is explained later in this newsletter.

We have also welcomed Michael Bailey to the Committee as a temporary Speaker Coordinator

I wish you all a happy and peaceful 2026.

**Vanessa Day**

## CONTACT DETAILS

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



LOOK OUT FOR US ON FACEBOOK



## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Hon. President.	Cliff Bennett
Chairman	Vanessa Day
Treasurer	Christine Smith
Business Secretary	Kim Hill
Membership & Beacon Manager	Ritsaert von Oven
Website Manager & E-mail Monitor	Paul Jones
Speaker Co-ordinator	Michael Bailey
Group Co-ordinator	John Bowditch
Publicity/PR Co-ordinator	Roy Little
Newsletter Editor	Guy Yea
	Graham Meaden
	Victor Abbott

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 19th January**     **The remarkable Ernestine Edgcumb**  
An intelligent, spirited and observant woman.  
**Clive Charlton**
- 16th February**   **A Kayak Safari around Devon & Cornwall**  
Photographs and videos of wild life Rupert  
encountered whilst paddling.  
**Rupert Kirkwood**
- 16th March**        **“ I bet this never happened to you”**  
An extraordinary life experienced within the  
BBC.  
**Alex Leger**
- 20th April**         **Scones, secrets and sleuths in Devon**  
A world of cozy mystery writing, where seaside  
towns become crime scenes and secrets are  
uncovered.  
**Suzy Bussell**
- 18th May**           **Lost Devon and its forgotten stories**  
An insight into Devon’s history, exploring what  
little remains of the past and discussing the  
events that have formed the county today  
**Felicity Goodall**

## MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

It is that time of year again when I have to remind you that 2026 subscriptions are due before 1st April. This coming year the amount due has gone up to £20 to offset the steadily rising costs of running our u3a but I hope that you still feel that it is a bargain. If you pay by Standing Order, please remember to change it or Ritsaert will have to contact you for the payment of the extra £2!

If your details have changed (for example you have changed your email address, disconnected your land line, moved house etc) please complete a renewal form (downloadable from our website) and send it to Ritsaert whose address is on the form.

## CURRENT GROUPS

### **ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS**

Led by Peter Brooks  
Contact 01752 880891

### **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 01752 690962

### **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 Michael Bailey  
Contact 01752 892777

### **DARTMOOR DISCOVERY WALKING.**

Led by John Reynolds  
Contact 07857 048801

### **DARTMOOR HISTORY WALKING**

Led by Stephen Woodcock  
Contact 01752 691305 or  
07739122374

### **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 Jean Sherrell  
Contact 01752 691750

### **FOLK CLUB**

Led by Jan Niezgoda  
Contact 01752 896214

### **FRENCH IMPROVERS**

Led by Jill Sampson  
Contact 01752 691033

### **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Led by John Bowditch  
Contact 078660 77030

### **GEOLOGY**

Led by Mervyn Stewart  
Contact 07796306892  
& Graham Meaden  
Contact 07891711742

### **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**

**Group 1** Led by Barbara Yea

Contact 01752 895590

**Group 2** Led by John and Sue Lassan

Contact John 07910 127257 or

Sue 07521 063728

### **MUSIC APPRECIATION**

Led by Mike Swinson

Contact 01752 698041

### **NATURAL HISTORY**

Led by Celia Ralph & Trudi Bell.

Contact Celia 01752 892555 or

Trudi 01752 896937

### **NEEDLECRAFT (CRAFT)**

Led by Keith Mason & Kate Danby

Contact Keith 07779289462 or

Kate 01752 839105

### **PLAY READING**

Led by Michael Fraser

Contact 01752 830430

### **POETRY APPRECIATION**

Led by Ann Oakins

Contact 01548 830550

### **QUIZ**

Led by Bill McKimm

Contact 07935292055

### **READING GROUPS**

**Group 1** Led by Beryl Naylor

Contact 01752 417315

**Group 2** Led by Alison Stobart

Contact 07443619891

### **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

### **SPOON CARVING**

Led by Adam Hart-Davis

Contact 07901 554143

### **THEOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY & PSYCHOLOGY (TPP)**

Led by Vanessa Day

Contact 01752 651214

### **UKELELE**

Led by Joy Horwell

Contact 01752 893402

### **WINE APPRECIATION**

**Group 1**

Led by Ritsaert von Oven

Contact 07780 150750

**Group 2**

Led by Richard Matthews

Contact 07967 130599

## CHANGING OUR CONSTITUTION

Groups like ours have a constitution which should run alongside the National Constitution. That was changed in 2021, but ours has yet to be altered. (Ed: We are blaming Covid!)

We intend to rectify this in early 2026 and we hope to hold a short Extraordinary General Meeting before the February general meeting. You will be served the formal notice of the meeting shortly and I hope that it will go smoothly.

In the interim, period copies of the current and proposed constitution will be made available on our website for you to read.

**Vanessa Day**

## SUPPORTING IVYBRIDGE

Following initial discussions with the U3A Executive and the local Head of Library services at Ivybridge, it seems there might be some advantage in making ourselves available to support residents through offering short conversations.

We have the advantages of life experiences, a variety of employment experiences, and time to give to others. We can be disinterested, separate from parental or financial expectations. We can, variously, offer comments on CVs, interviewing, work experiences.

The Library can offer a public space, absolving us from a DBS requirement. It can be in a corner, offering a measure of privacy. It is early days but might involve a 20 minute conversation in a half hour slot, arranged by mutual agreement. It can be offered as a library service, increasing footfall in the library and thus continued justification for this precious resource.

Would you be interested in helping young people or those with challenges?

If you would, please contact either **Vic Abbott** on victor.plymouth@gmail.com or **Christine Smith** on farmsec100@hotmail.co.uk and they will investigate further.



### **Local History Group 1**

If, like me, a visit to Devonport Old Town is a rare event, it is well worth a return visit to see how things have changed.

The Old Market Hall for example, once used for the wholesale of fruit and vegetables, has had a major restoration and can be used for meetings, conferences and musical events etc. It also includes a cinematic dome and modern café.

Round the corner is the Old Guild Hall. This has had many uses over the years - guildhall, police station, law court etc. and has again been re-purposed for the community with meeting rooms.

If you really want to get your heart racing, climb up 137 steps to the top of the Devonport Column and experience the wonderful views it affords of Devonport, Hamoaze and Plymouth .

**Norman Simpson**

## GROUP NEWS

### Folk Club

Such a wonderful night of music and fun at our Ivybridge u3a Folk Club on Wednesday 17th September. We were treated by Geoff Lakeman to music and song, ranging from self penned songs to the music of Scott Joplin, .

What an evening it turned out to be as we found out as we had Dr Jim Coyle in our midst, who is a professor of music at Sydney Conservatorium in Australia. Jim is an ex-local boy who came with his relations ( who are members of our u3a) and had played many years ago with the Lakeman brothers.

At one point Jim pulled a penny whistle out of his pocket and played a tune along with Geoff.

A night never to be forgotten.

**Jan Niezgoda**







### **Day Trips Group**

On Monday 28th July we left Ivybridge and travelled by coach to Totnes, catching the river boat from Steamers Quay. The weather was very good and the commentary on the boat kept us entertained for the 90 minute journey.

We then went our separate ways in Dartmouth to explore the town and the 3 hours seemed pass all too quickly.

The boat cruise back was a little chiller, but coffees from the café were a welcome break as we passed the Britannia Royal Naval College, Agatha Christie's Greenway Estate, the riverside villages of Dittisham, Stoke Gabriel and the Sharpham Estate with its vineyards.



### **Day Trip Group**

On Wednesday 1st October we caught the coach to Killerton House. (see photo front cover). Owned by the National Trust, this fine 18th century house was built by Charles Acland and his family.

The grade II listed building is set in parkland with an impressive plant collection. In the grounds is a chapel (see above) where Sir Charles read the lesson every Sunday, and shook the hands of all his tenants. Woe betide if any did not attend without good cause.

Another fantastic day weather wise, Rhoda has obviously got connection there with the weather gods. Thank you for organising yet another interesting trip. We look forward to next year.

## GROUP NEWS

### **Dartmoor Discovery Group**

Our group has grown since the last newsletter. We are now about a dozen strong.

There is still room for more to join us, but don't delay before we reach our maximum potential!

Our walks are at varied locations on Dartmoor, we look at and discuss many topics of interest – which our knowledgeable and experienced guide brings to our attention. The walks are not strenuous, as the emphasis is on discovering new things.

We meet on the fourth Thursday of the month.

Please do contact me on [johnwfreynolds@gmail.com](mailto:johnwfreynolds@gmail.com) or phone 07857 048801

**John Reynolds**, Group Leader



## GROUP NEWS

### Local History Group 2

As another year comes to an end, it's time to look back on a successful & interesting 12 months, with visits to Exeter & Topsham in the east and the 'Cornwall at War' museum at Davidstow in the west, together with such diverse places as the Longhouse on Dartmoor, the Jewish Cemetery in Plymouth and the Naval Heritage Centre in Devonport, Lady Astor's house Plymouth (see photo below) among others. All were preceded by a group meet-up for lunch at some lovely venues.

None of this would have been possible without our group leader, Derek Philips, who has decided to stand down after 12 years of searching for, and booking, all of the places that we have visited, so on behalf of all of our members we would like to pass on our sincere thanks for all of your efforts. With this in mind, my wife Sue and I will be taking over as joint leaders in the New Year. It will be a hard act to follow, but we aim to continue in a similar vein with more visits to, hopefully, interesting places and look forward to your continued support.

**John & Sue Lissan**



## GROUP NEWS



### **Chair Yoga**

Chair Yoga continues to be popular with two groups meeting at Bittaford Village Hall.

Group One is led by Sylvia Rutley and Glo Horton, the second group led by Debbie Harris-Bowditch.

As you can see from the photo, it is not all to do with sitting down. Each exercise is modified for an individual person's ability, so that all have a work out that keeps us fit and healthy, which is so important in our daily lives.

Although it may seem like hard work, we have lots of laughs and fun, and it is proving very popular.



## GROUP NEWS

### Canasta Group

We meet twice a month on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday at the Bittaford Village Hall for a 2 hour session.

The game originated in Uruguay in 1939. It is played with two packs of cards and 4 players, although you can play with 2, 3 or 6 players.

Initially you make melds of 3 cards of the same value which you build on to make a Canasta (7 cards). Cards have different values according to their face value. The purpose of the game is to reach 5000 points.

The more points you score, the more card values you need to put in an initial meld - in other words you are handicapped. This is what makes the game interesting.

The Group has been running since way before I joined, but I have found it most enjoyable and recommend it to all.

During the last two years we have had a very pleasant joint meeting with Plymstock u3a group as a charity event, raising funds for SW Children's Hospice A cream tea was provided by the good ladies of Bittaford.

---

## FURTHER NEWS





## Christmas Celebration

Once again we all met in the Watermark to enjoy a mince pie and refreshments for the festive season.

We were entertained by our Drama group who took a “tongue in cheek” look at comparing the past and the present. Then the Choir sung four songs and led the carol singing at the end.

Bill McKimm organised the quiz and both it and the raffle were a great success.

Thank you all who helped put this together, participated and helped on the day.



## GROUP DIARY

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