

## **FEBRUARY/MARCH 2025 NEWSLETTER**

Welcome to the February/March edition of the Lostwithiel Area u3a Newsletter. In this issue there's news of our Art Appreciation group getting a mention on the BBC, the Family History group looking at the use of Tithe Maps and AI (Artificial Intelligence) in genealogy and the Strummers Ukulele Group performing two Christmas concerts at Lanhydrock.

### **JANUARY OPEN MEETING**

Our first – very well attended - Open Meeting of 2025 was on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January in the Church Rooms in Lostwithiel where the guest speaker was **Lynn Goold**, who took us on a guided tour through **Daphne du Maurier's Cornwall**. Lynn gave us some fascinating insights into du Maurier's life in Cornwall and how the landscape, people and places influenced her novels such as *Frenchman's Creek*, *My Cousin Rachel*, *Rebecca* and *Jamaica Inn*. Lynn also gave us some background into the du Maurier Fowey Literary Festival, of which she is a trustee.

And in our Community Slot, **Sheila Bawden**, in her role as Chair of the **Lostwithiel Social Club**, gave us an update on the Club as well as delving into the past, telling us how it was formed in 1890 and how it had recently been revived, with events such as the highly successful Mrs Jarley's Waxworks – it's great to know we have such a wonderful, volunteer-run, community asset here in the centre of Lostwithiel! Our Membership Secretary, Stephanie Thomas talked us through the membership renewal process for 2025 (see below) and we were treated (?!) to some Christmas Cracker jokes from our Chair.

### **MARCH OPEN MEETING**

Our next Open Meeting is on **Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March** at 2pm in the Church Rooms, Lostwithiel where we'll be hearing from local historian **Brian Oldham** about **Trades and Occupations in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Liskeard**; the town expanded rapidly during the Caradon copper boom and became an important business centre in east Cornwall. Almost every shopkeeper employed a live-in domestic servant and local investors built new homes from their dividends but many did not survive quite so well. The

talk looks back at life in the bustling market town where the population increased by 50% in just ten years. Brian is President of the Liskeard Old Cornwall Society, is a volunteer at Liskeard and District Museum and has the Bardic name of Istorior Lyskerrys.

## **2025 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

You should by now have received a message from Stephanie Thomas, our Membership Secretary, about renewing your membership which expires on 1st March 2025. The good news is, despite rising costs, membership fees have been held at the same amounts as last year, helped primarily by Gift Aid contributions. As Stephanie noted in her message, the preferred way to pay is by Credit or Debit Card via PayPal using the Beacon Members Portal. If you haven't already done so, It's really easy to set this up and there is a very helpful step-by-step graphic guide on our website. Thank you for supporting your local u3a!



## **Updates from our Groups**

*For group contact details and more information please visit the groups page on our website*

### **Acoustic Guitar for Beginners**

The group is aimed at people who want to start learning to play the guitar. It meets in the Scout Hut in Lostwithiel on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 10.00am until 12.00pm.

The group has been doing really well and has come a long way since we first started in early 2023. We have learnt several chords now and use them to play along to backing tracks of well-known but simple songs. The group meetings are divided into two parts : the first is an informative session where different guitar playing techniques, chord shapes, strumming patterns and everything guitar is discussed. After a short break for a coffee and a natter we then move into the second part where we play along to songs using the techniques taught in the first half as well as what we've been practicing at home. The aim is to make this as much fun an experience for everyone as possible and hopefully at the end of each meeting people go away having enjoyed it as well as having learnt something new about this wonderful instrument called the guitar.

### **Art & Craft Experiments**

The main aim of this group is to encourage creativity in any medium you want, and not to be afraid of "giving it a go". Whether you are an artist or a doodler; a knitter or embroiderer, we hope you will try mixing up styles and mediums with the help and encouragement from our group.

Our meetings are held the last Friday of each month – 10.30am to 12pm. We will either be out and about or held at a local venue. Group contact : Heidi Swire on 0776 690 0179

## **Art Appreciation**

We visit exhibitions galleries, stately homes with collections, craft shows, sculpture gardens, locally and further afield. We want to interpret Art as widely as possible, and see and learn about new works as well as those we already admire and love.

The group held their planning meeting in the Royal Oak, Lostwithiel in January and have now got a number of visits in the diary, starting with a trip in February to Boconnoc House to see the exhibition of portraits of the Mohun family. This will be followed in March by the group's annual trip by train to St Ives for those interested in visiting the Tate St Ives, those who missed the Barbara Hepworth museum last time and the Penwith Gallery. And some of you may have heard about the intriguing painted panel of the Crucifixion in St Bart's church found in a local barn which was featured on BBC Radio Cornwall's Breakfast Show with James Churchfield on 29th January. The broadcast included interviews with Revd. Sheila Bawden and group member Pat Stearn, who not only mentioned she was on her way to a u3a Art Appreciation meeting but also gave a very considered and positive critique of the artwork! *(You can still hear the piece on the Radio Cornwall page of the BBC Sounds website)*

## **Beverage 'n Banter**

If you enjoy a cup of Coffee/Tea (refill included) and a biscuit in an informal atmosphere and would like to meet up with other u3a Members - this could be the group for you! Cost just £3 per head. The group usually meets on the first Monday of the month when there isn't an Open Meeting - the next meeting is on Monday 3rd February in the Fowey Valley Hotel. Our "Christmas Special" was hosted by our Vice Chair Annie Singer, and featured a merriment of mince pies! Around 20 "revellers" were in attendance.

## **Bridge**

After trialling venues in town we are now established happily in the Scout Hut in Lostwithiel, still on Wednesdays 2pm - 4.30pm. However, we now skip the refreshment break and those who miss their cuppa bring a flask! As we now have this lovely space and ample tables we are happy to invite more players to join our group. If you would like to try an afternoon's bridge with our group please contact Jenny MacDonald on 01208 873933

## **Creative Writing**

Another year and the group is still going strong. It is now twelve years since the group started and the number of stories written over the years must run into hundreds. The collective creative energy generated could, possibly, power the whole of Lostwithiel (maybe that's a bit of an exaggeration!).

## **Creative Writing 2**

Meeting dates for the first half of 2025 are now confirmed at 2pm in the Community Centre on these Wednesdays : Feb 19th; March 19th; April 16th; May 21st and June 18th. The group is now full and is operating a waiting list - group contact Nigel Ayers on 073 914 689 04.

## **Day Trippers**

The Day Trippers aim to use just public transport for their trips - if possible with a bus pass and a railcard. Trips in 2024 included Looe and Camborne (for Trevithick Day).

## **Electric Bikers**

In December we had rides from Indian Queens to Bedruthan Steps on the 4th and Carnglaze Caverns to Siblyback and on the 11th. We had our Christmas Lunch at the Britannia Inn. In 2025 so far the group has cycled from Lanivet to Blisland and St Austell Rugby Club to West Portholland, both 24 miles.

In 2024 we did 46 Rides, totalling 1,060 miles - not bad for a set of Oldies! If you are interested in joining the group please ring Brian on 07530507091

## **Family History**

We are a friendly group who help each other with our "brick walls"; sharing information & the use of various web sites to help our research.

On January 15th there was fantastic attendance with 14 present for our first meeting of the year! David Platt had undertaken some research on Tithes Maps and their use in Family History which he shared with the group. This involved some examples using The Genealogists "Explorer Tool" which enables various maps to be laid on top of each other thus tracing, when each layer is revealed, the evolution of the particular landscape. Perhaps surprising to many of us, The Genealogist has recently beaten both FindMy Past & Ancestry in an independent review carried out by WDYTYA magazine. Our next meeting, on 19th February, sees us taking a look at the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Family History. Fascinating stuff!

## **French**

Meetings are held on alternate Tuesdays 2.45pm - 4.15pm in the Lostwithiel Community Centre Reading Room (where the mobile Post Office is held). The next meeting is on Tuesday 4th February. The group is very informal and of mixed ability, but not really suitable for absolute beginners. Most of us have some school French. We share our knowledge of the language and experience of French life and culture with each other. There is always a lot of laughter and "*déviaton*" along the

way! There is now a waiting list to join this group. Group contact: Veronica Ashworth 01208 873397

## **Garden Visits**

There are times when you need to stop working in your own garden and get inspiration from other people's creativity and hard work. Our programme of visits to gardens, usually in Cornwall and Devon, starts in February to visit a snowdrop garden and ends in October to admire the autumn colours. You can see lots of colourful pictures of past garden visits on the Lostwithiel Area u3a website. Our planning meeting for 2025 visits is at the Royal Oak in Lostwithiel on February 10th.

## **Lunch Group**

The Lunch Group is a friendly group of singles and couples who meet for lunch on the 4th Wednesday of each month at as many different locations as we can find within 30-40 mins of Lostwithiel! Between us we have discovered some really good places to eat. The lunches usually start at 12.30 for 1pm. Members take it in turns to organise and host the lunches, so if no one volunteers there's no lunch!! If you are interested in joining please contact us to have your name put on the waiting list.

2025 kicked off with a very enjoyable lunch at the Jubilee Inn, Pelynt organised by Doug Mills. The usual buzz and banter from the twenty members who attended including two newcomers from Polperro, who have very recently joined Lostwithiel Area u3a.

The varying monthly venues for 2025 have been decided amongst the members and now been booked - some new and some old faithfuls - details of which are on the Lunch Group website.

## **Nature and Bird Watching**

Though primarily we are a bird watching group we do in reality take an interest in all wildlife we come across, from mammals, insects and butterflies to plants and fungi. You do not need to be an expert, all are welcome and if you enjoy photography do bring your camera. The schedule for 2025 is now on the website and after Walmsley and Middle Amble in February, the group will be closer to home at Respryn and Lanhydrock Woods in March.

## **Photography**

We are a friendly photography group with a wide variety of skill levels and interests. The group meets three times each month. One of our meetings sees us out around Cornwall and sometimes further afield, taking pictures and helping each other to try new photographic techniques and challenges. There are also two meetings held online - in one we share and discuss images based on a monthly theme, whilst in the second we explore a variety of topics related to camera techniques in a little more depth. Over the last ten years we have also held four successful exhibitions .

We welcome members with all ranges of ability and equipment - most of us started using our phone as a camera! There is an annual fee of £10 to join this group to fund the Zoom licence which is used for our online meetings and allows us to post recordings of the meetings on our webpage.

The group's planned field trips for 2025 are on the website with Wheal Martyn planned for February, followed by Kennal Vale Nature Reserve in March. You can also find links to some wonderful images on their Flickr page. Group contacts : Stephanie Thomas 01208 841484 and Lindsay Southgate 01208 873371

## **Poetry**

Currently our meetings are held monthly every 1st Friday of each month at 10.15am in the Reading Room at the Lostwithiel Community Centre. Group contact: Celia Jones Telephone: 01208 871736

## **Pop and Rock Music Appreciation**

The group is now entering its 3rd year and has now listened to - and talked about - over 365 tracks!

Our December meeting was a **Free Choice** session and we heard music from Laibach, Flogging Molly, Marcus King Band, Toy Dolls, Kandace Springs, ELO, Coldplay, Ed Sheeran, Thomas Dolby, Joni Mitchell, David Bowie, Taylor Swift, Madeleine Peyroux and The Bahama Soul Club. The Tenuous track was Simon and Garfunkel's Bridge Over Troubled Water. The first meeting of 2025 had the theme of **New Year, New Song**, and among selections we listened to were The Quik, Idles, English Teacher, Rob Reed, Fisherman's Friends, Amy Rigby, Frazey Ford, and Cindy Lee; Robin Trower provided the track for our Tenuous feature with Bridge of Sighs.

## **Scrabble**

The group would be delighted to hear from any new members. They are a friendly little group and not over serious, playing purely for enjoyment. The group meets fortnightly on Thursdays at 2.00 pm at the Royal Oak. All equipment is supplied. For more details please contact Jon Hancock 01208 269456

## **Strummers Ukulele Sing Along Group**

Meetings start at 2pm every Monday in Lanhydrock Memorial Hall. We have now revised our meeting format with all group members selecting a song at random for the group to perform. This seems to be working extremely well and you are most welcome to come along and join us at one of our meetings. In December we continued to meet on two Mondays while for the other two we were doing a concert at National Trust Lanhydrock reception hub. We meet every Monday afternoon for a 2 hour ukulele sing along. If you are interested please contact: Brian on 07530507091

## **Theatre**

We are a very lively, active and friendly Group meeting every 3rd Thursday morning of the month when members choose and help organise trips. We go to live and live-streamed theatre, music and dance in and around Cornwall and beyond. We use public transport where possible. When cars are required transport depends on availability of drivers.

Recent highlights have included *Hansard*, a Camp Threat Groups production and *Kiss Me Kate*, featuring an excellent cast led by *Line of Duty's* Adrian Dunbar; this was a live screening from the Barbican in London at Bodmin Cinema. Other highlights over the Festive period included *War Horse* and *Mormons*.

## **u3Art**

Members use a variety of drawing and painting media and we would welcome new members of all abilities. We are a non-teaching group but offer the use of reference books and members are always ready to share their experience and expertise if required. We compile a list of themes or projects to work to, for those who wish a more structured way of working, but that is entirely up to the individual as some people prefer to work on their own projects.

We meet at Lostwithiel Community Centre Oasis Room on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of every month, from 2pm to 4pm. We charge a small fee (£2 or £3 depending on attendance numbers) which pays for the hire of the room. Group Contact: Trish Penrose 07780 713276

## **Ukulele Workshop**

We are a group of enthusiastic ukulele players who are keen to improve our skills and make our music more interesting to listen to, by introducing more advanced chords/rhythms/riffs/arrangements/instrumentals etc. We continue to meet on a Friday afternoon at the Scout Hut.

Group contacts : Alan Pearce 01208 872592/Cezar Leon 07900 694520

## **Walking**

The weather has conspired against us and we had to cancel both January walks. Hopefully we will be able to resume our programme of walks in February. The challenge will be to choose walks which are not too muddy!

## **Wine Appreciation**

Our 2025 schedule is now on the website and we will continue with a regular fixture of 3pm on the last Monday of the month. The location will be either in a members home or the Café of the Community centre. We plan to go to other locations for visits to tastings and vineyards, to be advised. Group contact: Michael Furminger 07715546026

## **Contacts**

Chair - David Platt 07484124490

Membership - Stephanie Thomas 07980871491

Lostwithiel Area University of The Third Age  
Address: c/o Polmena House, Polmena Lane, Lostwithiel, PL22 0LB  
Telephone 01208 873792