

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the October/November edition of the Lostwithiel Area u3a Newsletter. In this issue there's news of our next few Open Meetings, a report from three garden visits and a face-off between a muddy puddle and a road. Plus, as the Pop and Rock Music Appreciation group hold their 20th meeting, who tops the charts?

SEPTEMBER OPEN MEETING

At our last Open Meeting in the Church Rooms on **Monday 9th September** we opened with **Tracey Bailey** from **Kana Lostwithiel Community Choir** (formerly Lost in Song) in our Community Slot. Tracey soon got us all singing a round - which certainly helped to blow away the cobwebs! - and explained how the group contributes both to community cohesion and wellbeing. The group welcomes new singers of all ages and abilities and meets every Wednesday at 7pm in the Scout Hut in Lostwithiel.

We then heard from **Mike Griffiths** with his talk ***Listening to the Enemy***, featuring the fascinating story of the Bletchley Park outstation in St Erth. Over several years, Mike has painstakingly researched the origins and purpose of this site. His father, Harry, was a radio operator at the station throughout the war and recorded many of his contacts in a little black book – his 'Code Book'. Mike talked us through how his father could identify German radio operators through their unique "fingerprint" and how messages were deciphered at Bletchley Park - and we were able to hear an actual morse code message from an enemy operative. Recounting the pivotal role played by code breakers and mathematicians like Alan Turing, W.T. (Bill) Tutte and Gordon Welchman, Mike also told the stories of double agents such as Agent Zigzag (Eddie Chapman) and the workings of the Double-Cross (XX) system.

It was enlightening hearing how Mike's father played such an important role at St Erth and it was brilliant that one of our members, **John Overy**, came along to the meeting with a Bletchley Park medal awarded to his relative Mrs Louisa Joan Alexander. Louisa Joan was selected for Bletchley Park at age 18, probably because she had done well at school, and was there from 1942, working a 14 hour day, 7 days a week, with just one visit home in all that time. Her parents never knew where she was or what she was doing. Bletchley Park commemorative medals were only given to people like her years later when Bletchley Park was no longer secret.

Louisa Joan will be 100 on 7 October 2024 and John, as her next of kin, has been busy organising the big day in Kent. Members of Parliament, the Government, GCHQ and senior members of the intelligence services have met and spoken with her in recent years. Many thanks to Mike and John for sharing the vital contributions their relatives made during the Second World War.

UPCOMING OPEN MEETINGS

Our next, highly topical, Open Meeting is on **Monday November 4th at 2pm** when our Guest Speaker - and local resident - **Robin Dyer**, will be talking to us about ***The historic US Election of 2024 - the fight for America's democracy and its soul*** - just 24 hours before the US Presidential Election is held! The venue, as usual, is the Church Rooms in Lostwithiel.

And for our first Open Meeting of 2025 on **Monday 6th January** our guest speaker is Lynn Gould who will be talking to us about ***Daphne du Maurier's Cornwall***, while on **Monday 3rd March** we'll be hearing from **Brian Oldham** about ***Trades and Occupations in 19th Century Liskeard***. Our Speaker Secretary, Karen Dickin, is now working on finding further guest speakers for next year and as soon as they are confirmed you will read it here first!

IDEAS FOR NEW GROUPS ?

At our last Open Meeting we had some suggestions for new groups - these included Backgammon, Knitting, Mah-Jong and Canoeing/Kayaking. Do you have any interests or hobbies that might merit sharing with a wider audience and fit in with the u3a ethos? We already have over 20 fantastic groups but if you have any ideas for more please let our Groups' Coordinator, Annie Singer, know on 01208 871272 or annie.singer@talk21.com

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.

Art & Craft Experiments

The Art & Craft Experiments group meets regularly on the last Friday of each month – 10.30am to 12pm, either out and about or at a local venue.

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.

In August the group went to Falmouth by train where they took in a display of the Kurt Jackson/RNLI collaboration as well as visiting other galleries in the town, including the Falmouth Art Gallery. In September the group again travelled by train, this time to the Penlee House Gallery and Museum in Penzance, which had an exhibition commemorating the 150th anniversary of the birth of the Newlyn School artist Harold Harvey.

Beverage 'n Banter

If you enjoy a cup of Coffee/Tea (refill included) and a biscuit in an informal atmosphere & 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 - however, the next meeting is on **Monday 21st October**, which is later in the month owing to prior bookings at the venue.

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 will soon be 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!). Although this group is now full, Creative Writing 2 (see *below*) is still taking new members.

Creative Writing 2

In arranging our meetings we try to avoid clashing with other group meeting dates and these have now been confirmed until the end of year, all at 2.30pm in the Lostwithiel Community Centre : **October 16th; November 20th; December 18th**. Our most recent story theme was "*Such things as dreams are made on*". Group contact : Nigel Ayers on 073 914 689 04.

Day Trippers

The Day Trippers aim to use just public transport for their trips. Recent trips have included Looe and Camborne (for Trevithick Day).

Electric Bikers

Rides in August and September included Lanlivery to Eden (20 miles), Dragon Leisure Centre to St Wenn (23 miles), Lostwithiel to Polruan (22 miles), Bodmin Airfield to St Teath (24 miles), Eden to Lanhydrock (22 miles) and St Austell Rugby Club to Gorran Haven (23 miles).

The group is full but if you have an ebike and are interested in joining 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. We are now in 'summer recess' and will start again on **16th October**.

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) New members very welcome! 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!

Group contact: Veronica Ashworth 01208 873397

Garden Visits

In August the group visited **Lametton Mill** at St Keyne (as featured on Channel 4's *Grand Designs*) where fifteen of us enjoyed a sunny-ish visit. We had a very interesting talk about the history of the house by the owners, Richard and Leigh, including the background to massive revamp shown on the programme. We were then shown around the garden and were so impressed by what they have done in a very short time. Lots of unusual plants - and looking very mature despite the first planting being done in 2021 and some areas not planted until last year. We were able to look around their propagating area and there were great plants for sale. Finally we enjoyed tea/ coffee and a choice of scrummy cakes before heading home.

In September it was a shame that just four members went on a very enjoyable and sunny day out to St Columb. **Lower Tregamere** was open for the National Garden Scheme in the afternoon so we were delighted when the owners of nearby **Rose Morran** agreed to open their garden for us in the morning. Peter and Jenny were very generous with their time and gave us a guided tour of the garden which they have been developing over the last ten years. The property and garden occupy a one-acre plot and the borders are full of shrubs and plants which provide texture and all year round colour. We also admired the trees such as the Chilean myrtles

and several varieties of acers as well as prunus full of white or pink berries which looked so pretty against the clear blue sky. We then moved to the one-acre grass area surrounded by edges where shrubs such as the Mexican shrimp plant thrive. Peter and Jenny also have raised beds and a greenhouse where they propagate plants to sell for the NGS as well for Pencarrow House.

We had our picnic lunch in their garden, indulged in tea and cakes and bought several plants before making our way to the next garden, Lower Tregamere, which was a total contrast! It can be described as a natural, even wild garden, divided into three sections and with intriguing features at every corner. Much of the garden was put in place by the globetrotting Blakes who built the house as a summer residence in the early 1920s. W.T. Blake led the first attempt to fly around the world in 1922. The current owners acquired the property more than twenty years ago, starting work on the garden ten years ago and continue to develop it to turn it into "their own paradise". The less common trees we saw were: Bamboo, Banana, Chilean fire bush, Ginko, Gunnera, Handkerchief tree, Katsuras, Korean and Norwegian Firs, Redwoods, Tassel bush, Tulip tree and Whitebeam. Intriguing features included a Chinese Gate, a doll house Swiss Chalet, Dan's seat, an owl sculpture and a chess board. It will be interesting to go back in a few years' time as the owners are planning many further improvements.

You can see lots of colourful pictures of all the garden visits on the [Lostwithiel Area u3a website](#)

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.

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.

In mid-August we held our annual planning meeting in Lostwithiel. We began with a walk through the nature reserve starting in Coulson Park. However, walk done we had to beat a hasty retreat to Marion's house for supper as the rain set in. There we enjoyed Jasmina's pasties and Marion found some home made ice cream and hot drinks while we put together next year's field trip calendar which is now on the website.

Photography

Photographers love Autumn! The lower light, the turning colours and the quieter locations tend to suit us better! September was an action packed month - discussion about silhouettes, sharing pictures of our favourite places, and a Field Trip to Dingles Fairground Museum. In August the group started with a fascinating discussion of some of our High Key images at the Photo Extra meeting. These meetings are a great way to extend our knowledge of different techniques and encourage us to experiment in our photography. The usual Platform meeting focussed on the theme of "Wild".

The Photography Group's page on the Lostwithiel Area u3a website has 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 10.30am in the Reading Room at the Lostwithiel Community Centre. Group contact: Josephine Child 01208 871284

Pop and Rock Music Appreciation

In August the group had to come up with some **Memorable First Lines**.....which included tracks from Fleetwood Mac, Queen, The Buggles, Steve Miller Band, The Rolling Stones, Van Morrison, The Damned and Taylor Swift. And the sixth track in our *Tenuous* feature was Danger Zone by Kenny Loggins. The September meeting - which had a theme of **Singer/Songwriters** - marked the 20th session of the group and a quick calculation showed that we had listened to or viewed over 300 tracks - or roughly about 2 solid days! The Rolling Stones topped the charts with six selections followed by Van Morrison with four. Not 'arf, pop pickers!!

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

Meeting starts at 2pm every Monday in Lanhydrock Memorial Hall. New Members and Beginners are welcome. (we can loan you a ukulele and get you started) Come along for a great Monday afternoon fun sing along

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.

A recent highlight was **The French Lieutenant's Woman** at The Minack Theatre in early August. We had a damp and misty start for our trip in the LAMA minibus, however, following a picnic in the bus and celebrating a birthday with one of our group, we saw a glimpse of sun and the mist began to lift for the sell-out performance. The French Lieutenant's Woman is a complex story of forbidden love, temptation and personal freedom. The book was written by John Fowles and originally set in Lyme Regis, so the real waves of Porthcurno dramatically accompanied the performance. Unfortunately, sometimes, the waves made hearing the dialogue very difficult, but the costumes were engrossing and the play had a fantastic cast of actors. The driver for our trip was amazing and very well informed about timing and parking at the Minack. A magical place to visit!

You can see reviews on other performances on the Theatre Group's webpage.

u3Art

Members use a variety of drawing and painting media. We now meet at Lostwithiel Community Centre Oasis Room on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of every month, from 2pm to 4pm (although this can be subject to change at times to accommodate other groups). The group is at present at full capacity, given the size of our venue, but if anyone is interested in joining, we can always take contact details in case we have a space in the future. 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

10th September Walk : **Lostwithiel - St Winnow** (and back). It was on a somewhat overcast day that nine of us set off from the Community Centre at 10:30am. Another two joined at the Earl of Chatham and one more at Coffee Lake and en route our u3a chairperson joined from his home. After going past Newham Farm we

headed along the track signposted as impractical for motors. We encountered a very large muddy puddle which some of our group decided to take a closer look at. On arriving at St Winnow we made use of the benches in the churchyard for our lunch stop. While we were there the little café opened up and some took the advantage of a cup of coffee/tea/ice cream.

We proceeded through the boat yard to follow the River Fowey before breaking out of the woodland into fields to face Newham Farm. A vote was taken whether to walk back along the track with the large puddle or divert back along the road. The road won! Along the way back we said goodbye to the people that we picked up along the route before returning to Lostwithiel centre.

Luckily the rain held off until we were back in Lostwithiel centre after walking just over 6 miles.

Wine Appreciation

In September the group took the LAMA minibus to Wadebridge for a wine tasting event. Wadebridge Wine offered a open event to taste wines from their collection and enjoy music, food and fun in their premises. The wines on offer were popular over the last fifty years. One favourite was a Cabernet Sauvignon / Tannat blend from Uruguay. A delightful red. Since there were eighteen other wines on offer everybody settled on a favourite be pink, white red or fizz. Our thanks go to Wadebridge wines who hosted a great event and to LAMA for getting us there and home again.

And it was a fine Bank Holiday afternoon outside the Community Centre for our August wine tasting. This was an all-white wine occasion with a selection chosen from Laithwaites Wine club – a special offer selection from Australia, France and Georgia, all at an offer price of £8 – hard to beat! The Sauvignon Blanc was perfect for a barbie, light and refreshing. Some preferred the French Chenin Blanc for its aromatic taste. The surprise was the Mtsvane from Georgia – really quite complex and interesting wine. For 2024 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 at the Community Centre. We plan to go to other locations for visits to tastings and vineyards. Group contact: Michael Furminger 07715546026