



*Some phrases that Winston Churchill loved, called Paraprosdokians (no don't ask me, I'm as baffled as you probably are):*

- *War does not determine who is right, only who is left.*
- *We never really grow up, we only learn how to act in public.*
- *To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target.*

\* \* \*

With the weather finally giving us a few days of sunshine it bodes well for our gardens and for our farming folk. We can but hope it continues. As we import around 60% of our food from across the world it does appear that farming is becoming of more vital importance in the future.

Our last speaker made us all aware of the importance of farming to secure our food for the future. More of that I'm sure from Sue.

The world currently is basically in a mess as we all know, with ongoing and new wars, cost of fuel and living costs escalating and people of all races around the world seemingly just about keeping their heads above water. We can at least benefit locally from belonging to our extended u3a family. Schemes such as ours, along with other national institutions can help in maintaining friendship with others of like mind and interests.

It can only be hoped that more people find the benefit of our style of companionship and involve with it themselves, as the impact on all our lives can be very powerful. I can't remember who said "Find a group of people who inspire and even challenge you; spend time with them, and it can change your life" but it goes back a long way in history. With the local elections coming up in May it would be nice to apply some of this to your chosen candidate. Let's hope that whoever is elected will endeavour to change our lives for the better and actually relate to our needs.

I will be unavailable for next month's meeting, but you'll be in the very capable hands of Chris Wilson-Town, your Vice Chair, and please put in your diaries Friday 19 June for our Annual General Meeting. I realise it's some time in the future but better early than late.



# Speakers' Corner

Sue Clements



'Farm to Fork' was the title of the talk at our last general meeting.

## Overview

- Importance of farming in the UK
- Types of farms and crops
- Livestock farming
- Sustainability challenges
- The future of UK farming

David Curry, who is a retired ecologist, came to tell us of the importance of farming and how we can support not only the farming community but also the nation's economy and our own health by supporting our farmers.

Currently we produce just 60per cent of our food and imports can be vulnerable to extreme climate conditions also by geopolitical events such as the current wars in Ukraine and the Middle East.

It is obvious, therefore, that it would be advantageous to eat more home grown produce and that would mean more seasonal ingredients. David went on to deplore food waste and criticised supermarkets for the exacting standards they impose on the producers which often result in good crops rejected because of size, shape or colour.

The organic food revolution is good for us all but as one audience member pointed out is often more expensive and therefore not in the reach of families with heavy commitments.

David spoke of the technical revolution in practices such as vertical farming which enables herbs and strawberries to have longer growing periods. Also satellite technology in tractors and agrivoltaics where land may be used for both farming and energy production by installing solar panels etc.

It was a thoughtful session and we were encouraged when shopping to look for the Union Jack or red tractor logo on our purchases. I am sure we could all be healthier if we took just some of David's advice. After all as the saying goes 'we are what we eat'.

Sue

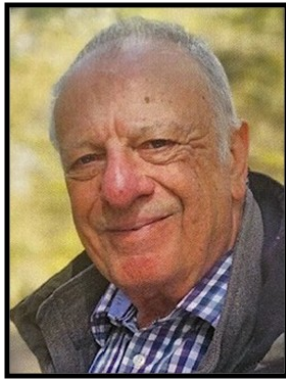
(The list of seasonal food shown during the talk is available on request. It is in very small print and too big to include here.)

## Upcoming General Meetings 2026

15 May Mike Haywood The History of the Mirror

19 June The Fire Service

17 July The National Open Gardens' Scheme and its Origins



## *Robin Mealing*

*10 February 1946 - 15 March 2026*

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Robin Mealing in March.

Robin was an enthusiastic member and leader of walking groups in both Plymouth and Plymstock u3as before taking on the leadership of our Short Walk Group in 2020.

This group has flourished as he willingly and enthusiastically shared his knowledge and love of our Devon countryside with so many of us. Friendships have been formed, new pathways explored, and members have been encouraged to join in beyond their comfort zones.

Who will forget those stories and anecdotes! We never did know which were improved by his fertile imagination.

Sadly illness prevented Robin from joining the walks for the last year but the friendship, support and visits of so many u3a members during that time was greatly appreciated.

We are so grateful to both Robin and Mary for all they have given to this u3a and extend our condolences to Mary and to all the family at this sad time.

*Pam Kingsland*



## Message from our Membership Secretary

Dear Members

This message is going to all our members so thank you if you've already renewed ... and you can skip the rest of this message!!

There are, however, a few of you who haven't renewed yet and we don't want to lose you so, if you wish to remain a member ( or even if you don't) then please let me know soon by email to [membership@plymstocku3a.org.uk](mailto:membership@plymstocku3a.org.uk)

The fees are: - £15 for single membership, £28 for joint (both living at the same address)

If Plymstock & District is not your main u3a and you are paying a full rate to another u3a, then the membership fee will be £11.00 for single associate and £20.00 for joint.

Please make payments payable to Plymstock & District u3a preferably by Bank Transfer

The sort code is 20-68-10 Account number 63831310 and please add your membership number in the reference box or initial and surname if you don't know your number.

Get a cheque made payable to Plymstock & District u3a to me at 21 Smallridge Close, Staddiscombe, Plymouth PL9 9UT

As a last resort, we will accept cash (notes only) in a sealed envelope with your name and address on it.

I will process your renewals and get your new membership cards printed ASAP ... your oldcards will be usable until then.

If for whatever reason you are unable to collect your new card, please consider sending/giving me a small SAE so I can send it to you or ask another member or Group Leader to collect it on your behalf. (Over 100 membership cards weren't collected last year!!)

Best wishes

Shirley

**Renew for another  
happy u3a year !**

## News from the Groups

### **Music Enjoyment:** Sue Clements

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 13 May at 10:00 at Fort Stamford. Please try to arrive a little earlier so that you have time to order any 'half time' coffee/drink.

We are being treated to a film of the opera *Turandot*. It tells of the 'ice' princess who sets a riddle for her suitors to solve.

It includes the famous tenor aria 'Nessun Dorma'.

We pay £2.00 per person to cover the cost of the room hire.

Anyone wishing to try out the group, do come along, you will be most welcome.



### **Quiz Group** - Bob Champ

Our April meeting had another very good attendance with eight teams competing. It was my turn to present the Quiz this time. It was another close contest with only one point in it and a tie break for second place. (Tie break question: "What was the population of Plymouth in the 2021 Census?" Answer below.)

Our next Quiz will take place at The Staddy on Wednesday 13 May at 19:30 when Jan Langelaan and Mel Cockings will be our hosts. Admission will be £1 00 per member. Drinks available from the bar.

New quizzers are always welcome. Bring along a team of four or come along individually and we will find a team for you to join.

Tie Breaker Answer: 264,700

*Bob Champ*



**Photography** - Phil Mitchell  
Pat Green

For our April photoshoot, we went over to Devonport Park on a bright, but windy, sunny day in search of “Growth”. The trees were coming into leaf and the flower beds had been planted up with tulips and other spring flowers which were all in bloom to provide inspiration for us to utilise in creating our photographs. The park was very busy, as it was the school holidays, trade in hot drinks when we called in to warm up!

As usual our second meeting was at the Oakes Rugby club where we had approximately 80 pictures with each member allowed to show up to four photos. The more predictable interpretations of “Growth” included a lot of spring plants and trees with leaves and flowerbuds just opening up, as well as seedlings in green-houses. Then we also had the more unusual scenarios of pot holes “growing day by day” and the traditional marks on the kitchen wall recording the increasing height of family members as they grew over the years. My “thanks” go to all who submitted their work for us to enjoy and we look forward to seeing more of our photos next month. You can always see some of our images in this Newsletter and on:

Plymstock & District u3a’s website at

<https://plymstock.u3asite.uk>

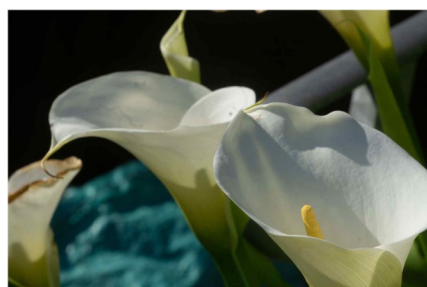
*Phil Mitchell*



Phil - Growing the Business



Jan - Parent, Teen-ager and Child



Peter - Three Stages of Growth



Sue Q - Growth of the City



Frank - Peek a Boo



Tony - Gorse Blossom

**Natural History** - Peter Scott

We met at Cadover Bridge hoping to see sand martins, and they didn't disappoint.

The birds were nesting in the river bank next to the car park, and were giving an amazing flying display swooping and gliding all around the area.

During a short walk further upstream it was a treat to see a bullfinch, as well as a close up of a chaffinch. On the opposite bank willow warblers could be heard, with an occasional glimpse as they flitted about in the bushes and trees.

There were a few other welcome signs of spring - pond skaters in the stream, one butterfly and a single ladies smock flower.

Species seen; -

Birds - sand martins, pied wagtail, magpie, crow, mallard, bullfinch, chaffinch.

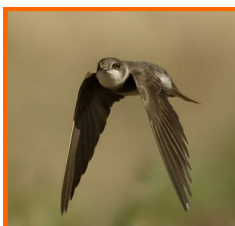
Flowers - gorse, ladies smock, celendines.

Animals - pond skaters, Dartmoor ponies.

*Hazel Scott*



Sand  
Martins



**Canasta** – John Eykel  
Sue Richards

The Canasta group continues to thrive, we still meet at Fort Stamford every Friday at 14:00 hrs and should you be interested in giving it a try, whether you are a complete novice or an experienced player you will be made most welcome.

The Ivybridge u3a Canasta group are holding their Charity Canasta event again this year at Bittaford Village Hall on Wednesday 3 June 2026, in aid of Children's Hospice South West, a very worthy charity as many of you will know. This is a fun event with cream teas and cakes included at the very reasonable ticket price of £6. If any Plymstock and District u3a member (this is not limited to the Canasta group members) would like to go then please contact me or my deputy.

*John*



### **Walking Medium Distance** - Pam Kingsland

The Medium Walk Group set off by bus once again this month and it was good to welcome new members to the group. We travelled to Modbury where we enjoyed a figure of 8 walk around fields and town.

Able led by Pete Scott, we learnt more about the Civil War battles around Modbury, and enjoyed the natural history with spring flowers and the evidence of oak marble gall wasps. Who knew about them!

Lunch in the sun in Modbury churchyard as the children arrived for their Maundy Thursday service was an added bonus.

If you would like to know more about this group please contact me, details above.

*Pam*



**Crafts & Textiles** – Wendy Whiteman  
Kate Payton

The Group have spent the last two sessions revisiting the use of felt and painting pottery at Clay Art on the Barbican. It's a good way to use up a stash and also kind donations which come our way. It's amazing how inventive we can be making attractive brooches. Hope it may give you some inspiration!!

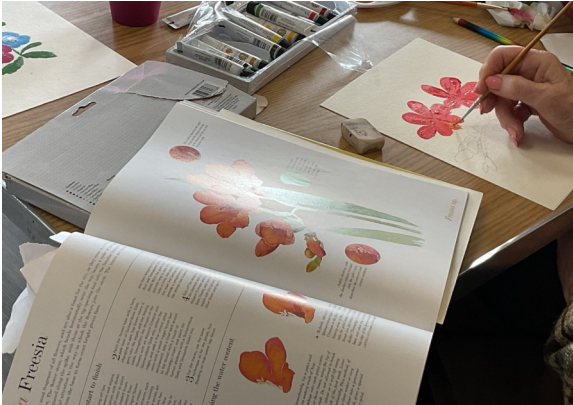
*Wendy Whiteman*



**Painting Group 1 - Sue Williams**

We are all in different stages of creating new art work also using different mediums, it is enjoyable watching a painting unfold from week to week. The talent is great and everyone helps with suggestions and advice. Discussions carry on during coffee break

Sue



## **Ukulele - Shirley Hammond**

We have recently welcomed new players who have now joined u3a and are developing their skills well - we meet at Fort Stamford on Monday at 11:00 - but are happily outgrowing the room so might have to reconsider.

We recently played at Elburton Heights Nursing Home and have been invited back in June so must have been ok - we play a wide range of music mainly pop songs from 50s onwards with a few others mixed in - it is fairly easy to get started on a uke and learn a few basic chords which allow you to join in quickly and then add more chords as you develop.

We pay £2 each for use of the room.

If you are interested please contact the group leader - details above.



## **Singing For Fun – Shirley Hammond Gunnevi Wood**

We would really like to welcome a pianist who could accompany us.

We meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at 10:30 until about 11:45 at The Forge on Knighton Road in Wembury.

Without a pianist we are developing other ways to accompany ourselves with guitars, keyboard and backing tracks which is working well for now but slightly limits our catalogue.

We sing a wide range of mainly popular songs at the moment and would welcome any new members but particularly altos and men.

If you are interested please contact the group leader, above.



## French Conversation – Anthea Heath

### EU Travellers Beware!

There are reports of passengers being stuck in lengthy queues and some left stranded following the full implementation of the EU's new entry-exit system (EES) on 10 April. This requires those without EU passports to have their fingerprints registered and photographs taken on EU entry and confirmed before departure. The introduction has been beset by technical problems causing disruption to ports and airports. Individual states have the power to temporarily suspend the new system but this is not always used. Air travel is particularly vulnerable to disruption as flight operators are concerned about crew working hours and landing slots. Airlines do not compensate for delays which are out of their control and insurers may be reluctant to do so.

Advice to those travelling to the EU: be prepared for queues!

*Anthea*



### Play Reading - Izzy Crow

Our twice-monthly meetings enable us to escape our everyday lives and briefly inhabit a completely different space. What we read varies from the intrigues of authors such as Agatha Christie and J.B. Priestly to the classic comedy of Noel Coward or Alan Ayckbourn. The plays of less commonly performed authors like Derek Benfield and Arthur Lovegrove give us just as much pleasure. We don't wear costumes, there is no rapturous applause, but we all enjoy exploring different genres and giving our best 'performance' without the pressure of learning lines.

If you enjoy theatre and would like to give our group a try please contact Izzy on [crowiz@aol.com](mailto:crowiz@aol.com). Alternatively you would be made very welcome at our meeting on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday afternoon at Fort Stamford.



<https://plymstock.u3asite.uk/groups/>

## **Astronomy** - Roy Fairclough

At the Astronomy group meeting in April, we discussed Artemis 2 and Elon Musk's ideas about landing on the Moon.

From an Astronomy point of view, we looked at Comet R3 PanSTARRS, and watched short videos of the planet Neptune, Planet 9 and the Sun's Heliosphere.

We then had a practical demonstration to show the distance between planets in our solar system, see the photos.

Finally, we listened to a video by Roger Penrose explaining Space!!

Also, in April there are the Lyrid meteors and comet R3 PanSTARRS to view in the Eastern sky.

If you are interested in these topics, then do come along and join our lively Astronomy group.

*Roy Fairclough*



**Local History** - Pauleen Stewart  
Jean Lyons



This month we again had the marvellous Pamela Vass to tell us the story of Mary Kelynack, a Newlyn fish joster who was a person who bought fish from the boats when they landed and sold them to people in the vicinity. Mary was 75 when she heard about the Great Exhibition in London the concept brought about by Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's husband.

Although very poor and never having left Cornwall she made up her mind to go to see the Exhibition and also to meet the Queen.

Pamela, dressed in the sort of costume Mary would have worn, recounted Mary's story that she had thoroughly researched, along with photos, newspaper reports and drawings, which showed a remarkable woman who decided that she was going to go to London and who succeeded in doing so.

Pamela also touched on some of the adventures Mary set out on after her return home.

*Pauleen*



**SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

19 May - Synagogue visit

16 June - Geri Parbly, on the discovery of wall painting of a ship from Henry VIII's navy in a house in Tavistock

## Walking Short – Norman Bealing

Our walk on 4th April was to the Belliver tor area. Only four people came which was a shame but we will try to repeat in autumn. The walk from Belliver forest car park was to the south and involved a gentle ascent of the tor. It gave really good views of the Dartmoor local area.

The 21 April walk was more successful with 22 people enjoying a bright but windy walk of five miles.

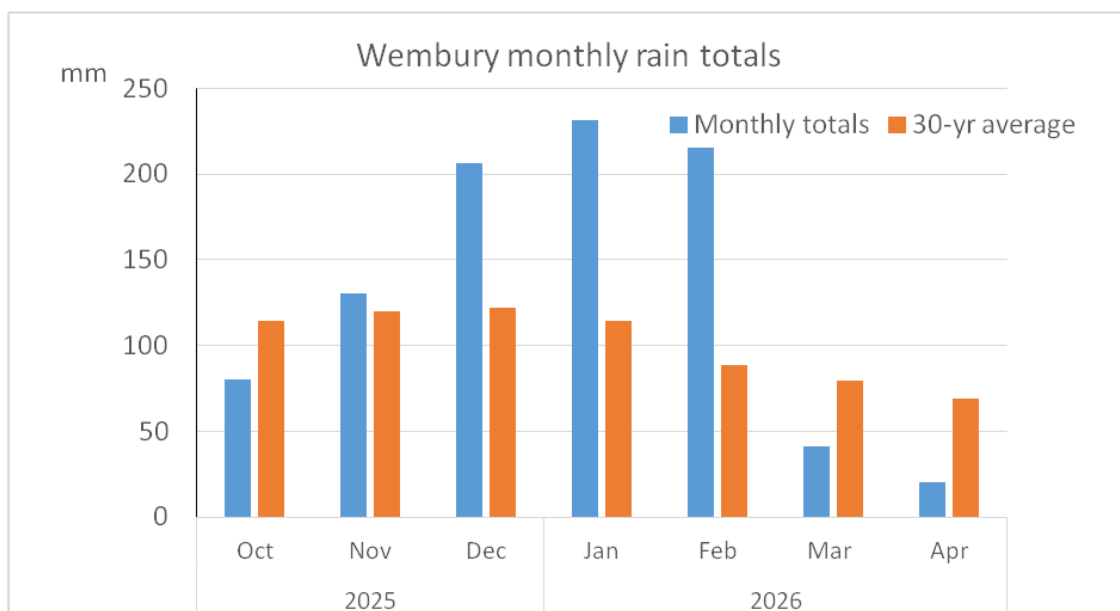
We walked from Lee Mill north towards the Slade estate and viaduct. We passed through woods full of bluebells and wild garlic with a coffee break at the viaduct originally built by Mr Brunel and due to its wooden structure had to be replaced when trains were getting much heavier. The return was interesting as we passed a field of guinea fowl and geese. Very dry underfoot today which makes a change.

*Norman*



## Weather and Climate - Len Wood

South West Water's reservoirs are full after an exceptionally wet winter, so no hose pipe bans this summer. It is a relief to see some dry weather in March and April and the bar chart below shows just how much below average the monthly rainfall has been.



### Spare Knitting Yarn

Please could you donate any spare knitting yarn? This will be knitted up into blankets, teddy bears and so on for Ukraine.

Thank you all for your support!



*Organiser: Sue Stoker*

(As usual there will be a box at General Meetings for your donations)

### NOTICE: Discarded Spectacles

I sent your kind donations to the people who send them out to Ukraine but they are not taking any more in the future as there's no-one to sort them once they are out there.

*Sue Stoker*

## **AWAY DAYS April 26 - TOBY'S GARDEN FESTIVAL**

Hello everyone! For those of you who may have missed our previous email regarding our forthcoming trip to Toby's Garden Festival, here are the details which now include how to book your ticket.

Our first trip will be to Toby's Garden Festival on Friday 1st May which is being held at Powderham Castle near Exeter, the 14th Century family home of the Earl and Countess of Devon. The main focus is to bring together the best nurseries from the West Country, including many well-known Chelsea medal winners, and host (two) days of gardening talks on a wide range of horticultural topics, all free to us. There will also be "top notch" arts and crafts, locally made street food to suit all tastes and free family music and entertainment.

There are various areas to explore, including the:-

**Artisan Barn** – under cover in the riding stables area, filled with market stalls offering craft, art, house plants, hand-made edibles and lots of indoor seating.

**Garden Village** – home to some of the best plant nurseries selling everything from agapanthus to zantedeschia, as well as rare and unusual plants at great prices.

**Feast Street** – a range of street food sellers including locally reared meat, vegan, and veggie options as well as light snacks, tea, coffee and lots of cake! This is where the Country Gardener Talks Tent will host the nursery speakers and demos.

**Castle and Courtyard** – under a rainbow of colourful pop-up gazebos, you will find a range of food craft and nursery exhibitors.

**Tickets will go on sale on Friday 10th April at 10:00 until 12 noon** (not before) by telephone or email:-

Sally Millmore  
Phil Mitchell  
Wendy Whiteman

The cost, including coach, entrance fee and driver's gratuity, will be **£30 by cash or cheque, made payable to Plymstock & District u3a Social Account**. If there are any tickets remaining, they will also be available at the General Meeting to be held on Friday 17th April or thereafter by email to Wendy [wendyann2591@gmail.com](mailto:wendyann2591@gmail.com)

The Festival is a collaboration by gardening broadcaster Toby Buckland and the magazine Country Gardener.

..ooOoo..

Our other Away Days for this year include a 1½ hour trip on the Tiverton Canal Horse Drawn Barge plus a visit to Knightshayes garden, house and parkland (National Trust) on Thursday 9th July and Widecombe Fair on Tuesday 8th September. More details will be available nearer the time.

*Sally Millmore*

## **NEW! FOREIGN COIN COLLECTION**

**Alongside the post card collection box there is now another box, in aid of the same charity** (Mission Aviation Fellowship - MAF) where u3a members can donate any odd foreign currency they may have left over from their trips abroad.

In addition to foreign coins redundant British coins may be donated.

All gratefully received!

As with the post card collection, Hazel Scott will be taking care of this.



## Mission Aviation Fellowship - MAF (Postcard collection)

Instead of recycling or discarding postcards which you receive, mostly during the holiday season, you may wish to donate them to the above charity - when you have finished enjoying them of course.

This charity flies into remote areas of the world, such as Papua New Guinea and Sierra Leone delivering education, supplies, and health workers to the poorest communities.

More details can be found on their website <https://www.maf-uk.org>

It is a Christian charity which may not suit everyone, but the work they do is vital and life saving.

In order to raise funds, picture postcards are collected - written on or not, old or new - and sold by the charity. A MAF box for the collection of your post card donations will be available at our monthly General Meetings.

*Organiser: Hazel Scott*

## Note from the Editor - Jan Langelaan

[newsletter@plymstocku3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@plymstocku3a.org.uk)

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Coming up next month we will of course be holding our Annual General Meeting. It brings to mind that we should be thinking of finding volunteers to 'shadow' Committee Members with a view to replacing current members when their term of office has been served.

Please think what you could offer your u3a and maybe attend a meeting or two, with no obligation, to see what is involved. Do get in touch with any Committee Member - contact details on the back page of the Handbook and on the website.

You will be given a warm welcome.

Click for website —> <https://plymstock.u3asite.uk/welcome/>