



Welcome to the August 2026 Newsletter.

This month, I thought I'd focus on some admin matters.

As you know, we're trialling two-monthly newsletters. There wasn't one in July if you're thinking, did I miss it. Group Leaders still provide monthly updates on group activities, but in the intervening months, they'll go to Paul, our Webmaster, and be published on our excellent and exceptionally informative website <https://plymstock.u3asite.uk/welcome/>

As chair, I'll continue with a monthly update which, as well as going on the website, I'm planning to circulate to all members - Beacon willing! Newsletter months will be October, December, February, April and June.

There are two reasons why Group Leaders will be asking for membership cards at your meeting. Shirley, our Membership Secretary, has a stack of unclaimed cards. If yours is among them, please get in touch membership@plymstocku3a.org.uk or Plymouth 248926. Or you could collect from the General Meeting on 21 August, when the speaker will be from the Devon Wildlife Trust talking about the land rather than the sea - beavers, pine martens perhaps? The second reason is for insurance purposes. All u3a members are covered by u3a insurance when attending meetings, and your membership card is proof.

Although there are 30 groups in the Members' Handbook, covering a wide range of interests and activities, the Committee is interested in hearing ideas for new groups. However, every group needs a group leader and, ideally, a deputy. Over the last couple of years some groups have folded - dwindling numbers or the group leader stepping down and no one stepping up are the most common reasons. If you have an idea, please share it but be willing to lead it.

Plymstock, with over 400 members, is a relatively large u3a for Devon and Cornwall, but we'll happily grow. A person doesn't have to be retired to become a member, rather 'not be in full-time employment'. So the Committee is asking everyone to stay alert for prospective new members. £15 per annum for access to 30 groups, brilliant Away Days, interesting and informative monthly General Meetings, and being part of a massive national organisation. Bargain!

Committee contact details are in the Handbook and on the Website. Committee members can be identified at the monthly meetings by the striking orange lanyard. Our amazing 'meet and greet' volunteers wear purple.

Enjoy the Newsletter and enjoy the summer. Take good care, *Chris*.

Speakers' Corner

Sue Clements



At our last general meeting Julia Tremlett gave us an enlightening talk about the origins of the National Open Gardens Scheme.

Many of us have visited such gardens regularly but never realised the intriguing history behind them.

In the 1850's a Liverpool politician, William Rathbone, had a very sick wife and he hired a nurse to care for her. When she died Rathbone, with the help of a friend, Florence Nightingale, set up a training school in Liverpool for 'district' nurses who were so badly needed at that time and when it was a century before the creation of the NHS.

Julia described the conditions that the early nurses worked with including not having a husband and thus a family life. She showed pictures of the nurses on bikes, motor cycles and the typical Morris Minor, weighing babies in unusual situations and so on.

Over the years the system needed money and so in 1927 it was decided to open country gardens to the public for a small fee.

The rest is, as they say, history. The scheme has grown exponentially and now is able to donate money annually to selected charities as well as giving many garden lovers enjoyable days out.



For dates and venues visit:

<https://ngs.org.uk>

Upcoming General Meetings 2026

21 August - Devon Wildlife Trust

18 September - Jim Causley - Dartmoor folk singer and story teller

16 October - Future Developments at Saltram

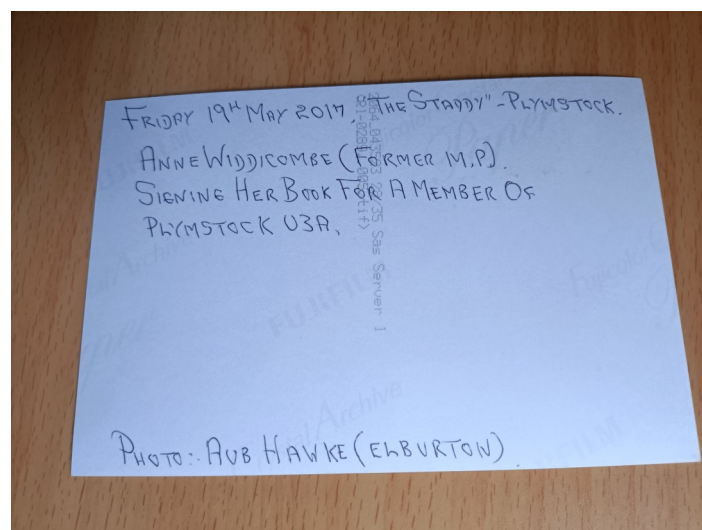
NOTICE

Ann Widdecombe

I'm sure you're all shocked by the recent news of Ann Widdecombe's dreadful murder. How many of you remember when this lovely lady came to talk to our u3a? It was Friday 19 May 2017. I hadn't realised that it was so long ago! She was an excellent speaker and one aspect of her talk was about Strictly Come Dancing when she was a contestant partnered with the lovely Anton Du Beke which I'm sure most of us will remember! Not necessarily for the quality of her dancing!

At the July meeting at The Staddy Aubrey Hawke showed me the photo below that he had taken at that meeting. Does anyone recognise the person with Ann, or are you indeed that person? Do please get in touch if you know who it is because should that person like a copy of the photo we will be happy to see what we can do to provide it.

Thank you - Sue Stoker via: newsletter@plymstocku3a.org.uk



Members' Corner



Thanks to Sue Sainsbury for making us 'giggle'

RESPECT YOUR
PARENTS

THEY PASSED
SCHOOL
WITHOUT
GOOGLE.



News from the Groups

French Conversation – Anthea Heath

The next meeting of the French Group will be 11 September as we are taking a break in August. We are not taking "French leave" as this means to go away or do anything without permission or notice. The first mention of French leave was in the 1751 edition of the Oxford English Dictionary when French and English cultures were closely interlinked.

Today the majority of French employees enjoy five weeks of paid holiday annually, generous French leave indeed.

I look forward to September and cooler days and hopefully RAIN!

Anthea

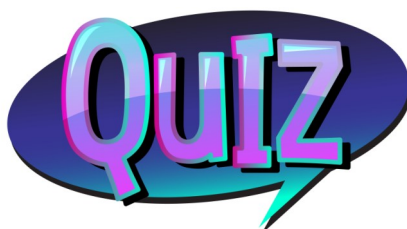


Quiz Group - Bob Champ

Many thanks to Nick and Lorraine Lowe for their well received Quiz on Wednesday 8 July. We had some worthy winners and a tie for second place. Tie break question: "How many baby teeth do children have?" { Answer below}

Presenting our Quiz on Wednesday 12 August at 19:30 at The Staddy will be Gerald and Gloria Coles. Admission will be £1.00 per member. Drinks available from the bar. All u3a members welcome. Either come along with a team of four or individually when we'll find you a team that you can join.

Bob Champ



{Tie breaker Answer: Children have 20 baby teeth.}

Walking Medium Distance - Pam Kingsland

In July the medium walk group enjoyed a walk from Ivybridge to the lovely country park and lake at Filham and around fields and lanes to little known hamlets like Penquit. Although the sun shone this was before the heat wave really hit so we all enjoyed ourselves safely!

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

Pam



Painting 2 – Di Hanson Wendy Whiteman

We have continued with good attendance through the hot summer weather and have welcomed a new member to our group. We had planned a workshop for June but it had to be cancelled due to the excessive weather conditions. We have re-arranged and it will now take place in October. After the disappointment of the cancelled workshop one of our group has volunteered to do an in house tutorial for us in August for which we are very grateful. Many thanks to Martin.



Walking Netball - Jenny Rundell
Carol Davison



We have had some varied sessions the last couple of months, having to play outside due to exams in the Sports Hall, which resulted in several wet Wednesdays, then back indoors and the heatwave struck, meaning we had to be sensible and only managed two rather warm games.

We are now on our summer break and start up again on 9 September 19:00 until 20:00 every Wednesday at Plymstock School Sports Hall.

All abilities welcome.

Jenny Rundell

Local History - Pauleen Stewart
Jean Lyons

For the July meeting we enjoyed a really splendid talk by Rosemary Griggs entitled, "A Lady of Noble Wit". It was about Katherine Champernowne a Tudor lady who was mother to both Walter Raleigh and Humphrey Gilbert.

As well as being a marvellous speaker, Rosemary dressed completely in period costume made entirely by herself.

She was a fascinating storyteller and I have booked her twice for next year. First, in March to give her talk on period costumes and other topics, then again in November to give a talk on a Tudor Christmas.



Ukulele - Shirley Hammond

We continue to meet through summer at Fort Stamford - we have had some new members join us who are settling in well.

We played at Wembury School fete (see photo) and were well received and had a fun session.

As ever if you are interested please contact the Group leader



Singing For Fun – Shirley Hammond Gunnevi Wood

We have now broken up for summer and return on the third Tuesday in September.

During the break we have agreed on some new songs which Tony is kindly arranging for us.

We are still seeking a pianist but in the meantime are using backing tracks keyboard and piano and the group are hopefully still enjoying the singing.

If you are interested please contact one of the group leaders.



Walking, Short – Norman Bealing



Thanks to Alan Eves I can report that the group had a great walk on 7 July with a good breeze which kept the temperature down. They went to the Trowlesworthy farms area on Dartmoor for a 5 mile walk near Cadover Bridge. This enabled splendid views over Dartmoor.

On 21 July 17 members walked along the Devonport leat as far as the Mayflower water treatment works for a refreshment stop. Then crossed a field to the Strawberry Fields cafe. We then returned north until the Clearbrook turning. It was a very hot day but a 4 mile flat walk compensated.

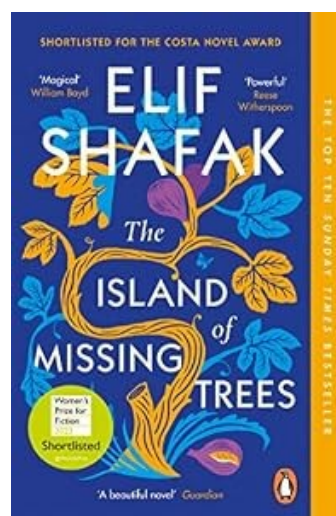
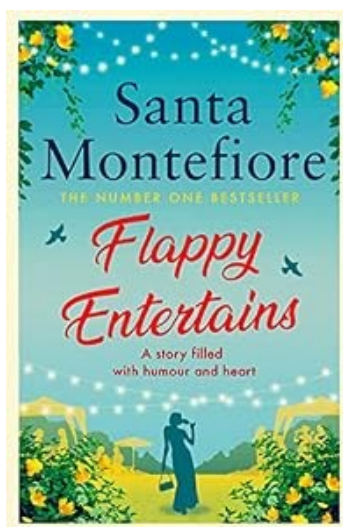


Reading Group – Mary Gaskins
Joan Sene

We now have a new book list. What a lovely crowd in the book club, shout 'help' and in no time we have more books:

August: The Great Gatsby by Scot Fitzgerald
September: Flappy Entertainers by Santa Montefiore
October: The Island of Missing Trees by Elif Shafak

More about these in the next Newsletter by which time we will have read more of them and discussed them.



Rummikub - Mo Baker
Joan Sene

Spare time alternate Mondays? Come join in the fun at the Billacombe. After 14:00 with a beverage in hand, we spend a couple of hours in good community as we try to dispose of our tiles on to runs on the table. Yes, it's like rummy, possibly even gin rummy, so if that's your bag - we'd love to see you! Coaching is on going for most of us still, but it's just fun to catch up and get the brain going!

Our August dates are as follows:

10th and 24th...for more info contact Mo, details above.



Natural History - Peter Scott

The July meeting of the Natural History Group was held at Saltram and led by Mel Cockings. The 12 Members attending found weather conditions favourable for wildlife viewing and identifying species as follows :



Birds : Mallard, Mandarin Duck, Moorhen, Magpie, Swallow, Chaffinch, Wood Pigeon, House Martin, Crow, Blackbird, Parakeet, Great Egret, Swan, Black Headed Gull, Heron, Pheasant.

Butterflies : Peacock, Gatekeeper, Large White, Meadow Brown, Small Heath, Speckled Wood.

Other Insects : Unidentified Grasshoppers and bees.



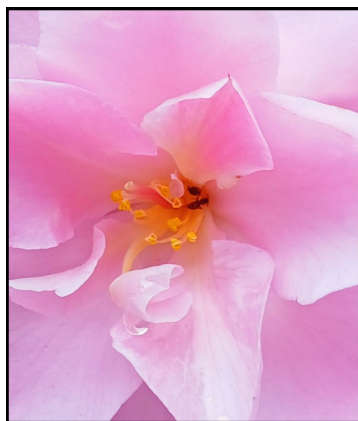
Further Group visits currently being planned include Andrews Wood nature reserve at Loddiswell , Wembury seashore and Calstock. A bird and wildlife cruise will be arranged once the winter boat schedule is published.

Peter Scott

Photography - Phil Mitchell Pat Green

Our subject for July was '*Just 2 Colours*' and it was interesting to see the various interpretations when we met to view Pat's beautifully presented Power Point review. A few samples below:

Tony - Pink & Gold



Karen - Green on White



Sue - Orange & Grey



Phil - Brown & Cream



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)

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.

Used Stamp Collection in aid of charity

The charities change from time to time but the stamps you collect always go to a good cause!

It will be much appreciated if you can trim stamps as shown here —>



.Thank you

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



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

WHO IS WHO!



At our General Meetings, or indeed any other event or function, when you see a person wearing a bright orange lanyard you will know that person is a member of our loyal Committee. When you see a person wearing a purple lanyard it means that person is one of our hard working and faithful volunteers.

Of course both groups of people are volunteers and always ready to help should you need anything. Don't be afraid to ask - we're happy to help..



SINGING FOR FUN GROUP

Amongst our over 400 u3a members is there someone who could help this jolly little group of singers? They are looking for someone to accompany them on the piano.

Please contact their group leader, Shirley Hammond
if you can help—thank you!