



Chair - Chris Wilson-Town

Welcome to the October 2026 Newsletter. As usual, the Newsletter is full of information about what our groups have got up to or have planned for the coming weeks. We've over 400 members but on average about 130 attend our monthly general meetings and listen to the visiting speakers Sue Clements (our Speaker Coordinator) arranges.

As an old folkie at heart, I really enjoyed September's presentation by Jim Causley. Sue has written about it, but I can tell you that Jim complimented our gathered members on the quality of their singing.

The difference between membership and general meetings shows that it's our groups which are key to our continued success. The u3a week (19 - 27 September) had 'expanding horizons' as its theme. Nothing to do with waistlines but rather trying something new, just for fun. I'd be interested to hear from any member who has done just that. Perhaps you could write something for our December Newsletter.

At September's general meeting, Richard Harvey (committee member for Group Liaison) asked if there would be any interest in a setting up a Qi Gong group. Maybe Qi Gong could be your 'expanding horizon'. If you are interested, please get in touch with Richard. Contact details for all of your Committee are at the back of the Handbook and on the website.

Members at the general meeting expressed interest in the Committee arranging a presentation by Devon & Cornwall's Crime Prevention Unit on Cyber Crime. Their talk has been very well received by Plymouth u3a and local WIs. As we have speakers lined up for our monthly meetings through to next July, it will have to be an additional meeting. Please look out for an email from myself or Andy Tattersall, our Secretary, about when we've managed to arrange it.

Finally, as a collector of LPs, I don't want to 'sound like a broken record' but I must mention our need for a new Treasurer. Nick Hammond has to step down at the next June's AGM and there are serious implications if we haven't a replacement. The best solution is for someone to come forward before then, so that she or he can work alongside Nick, enabling a timely handover. In addition, the regional u3a has set up a peer group to support treasurers and the Tamar Valley u3a Network (of which we're a member) has recently been re-established. Any interest or queries about what it involves please speak to me or Nick.

Enjoy your Newsletter. Take good care, *Chris*.



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Speakers' Corner

Sue Clements



No country in the world does not have its own folk tales: so said Jim Causley, who came to our last general meeting and entertained us with his stories about Devon legends and folk tales. He also played and sang songs illustrating, in particular, the folk tales of Dartmoor.

Jim began his talk by telling us about the renowned polymath Sabine Baring-Gould whose family owned Lewtrenchard Manor in Devon. He was a historian with a particular interest in folk tales, legends and folk songs the latter of which he collected hundreds. He also wrote hymns and carols with perhaps the most famous being 'Onward Christian Soldiers'.

Baring-Gould was a friend of George Bernard Shaw who was rather interested in Baring-Gould's own family history where he had fallen for a 15 year old mill girl Grace Taylor. The relationship was not considered proper for a minister and teacher so she was sent away for three years to learn how to be a 'lady'. When this was satisfactorily accomplished the couple were married and produced 15 children. GBS was so taken with this story he wrote a play 'Pygmalion' which was later made into the famous musical 'My Fair Lady'

Similarly another friend, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, was attracted to the legend of a fierce black dog roaming the moor and so he created the 'Hound of the Baskervilles' for Sherlock Holmes' adventures.

Jim's songs with musical accompaniment were greatly enjoyed by members who joined in the chorus where appropriate and many have asked for a return visit by Jim. I am sure we can arrange that next year so watch this space!



Upcoming General Meetings 2026

16 October - Future Developments at Saltram

20 November - Lest We Forget - A Commando Presentation

11 December - Christmas Gathering

Exciting News!

New Group? QI GONG is described as a “free flowing” form of Tai Chi. It does not use so many structured movements. We have heard from a volunteer who might set up and lead such a group.

If you are interested to join please let me or one of your Committee have your name. Many thanks.

Richard Harvey, [Groups co-ordinator]

Members' Corner

**Son: Dad, will you do my
math for me tonight?
Dad: No, son, it
wouldn't be right.
Son: Well, you could try.**

Just one small smile
this month!

News from the Groups

Quiz Group - Bob Champ

Our Quiz on Wednesday 12 August began with a Solar Eclipse and ended with a Firework Display.

Not to be outdone Gloria and Gerald Coules presented us with a selection of illuminating and entertaining questions enjoyed by all.

On Wednesday 9 September at a very well supported Quiz we showed our appreciation to Hazel and Peter Scott for their excellent set of questions.

Our next Quiz on Wednesday 14 October will be presented by Wendy and John Whiteman. It will begin at 19:30 at The Staddy. Admission will be £1 per member.

New contestants are always welcome. Either come along with a team of four or as individuals when we will find you a team to join.

Bob Champ



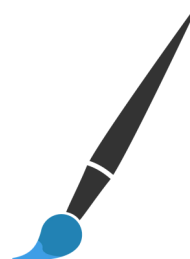
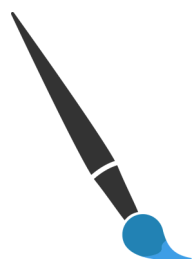
Painting Group 1 - Sue Williams

We have had a successful year painting with some very good finished items hopefully which will be displayed at the Christmas meeting.

A big welcome to two new members. Also sad to see some members leaving but wish them well.

We are looking forward to the workshop later this month exploring abstract of still life, by Andy of West Devon Art Workshops. Think it will be out of our comfort zone trying new ideas but hopefully fun. There may be some brilliant displays in next Newsletter.

Sue



Walking Rugby - Dave Glastonbury Phil Mitchell

The Walking Rugby group continues in it's efforts to 'Have Fun', meet new people, and if participating, to get a little exercise.

Our afternoon sessions are on Tuesdays, starting at 14:00 for about an hour or until we are too tired. The sessions take place at the King George V playing field in Haye Road, Plymstock. This is also the home of OPM Rugby - our joint venture partners.

When the excitement of playing or spectating has died down we return to the clubhouse for tea, biscuits and a long friendly chat.

Our evening sessions over the winter will take place in the gymnasium of Hele's School, Plympton from 19:00—20:00 every Friday. Whilst there are no organised meetings taking place after this session it has been known for some of us to repair to local hostelrys to tell each other how good we were and how good we might become. It's all usually rubbish but we do enjoy it.

If anyone is interested in the above, or have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Dave on 07905 447323.



French Conversation – Anthea Heath

The Bayeux Tapestry

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex were not the only celebrities returning to the United Kingdom this summer accompanied by public interest and provoking questions: we have also welcomed The Bayeux Tapestry. Unlike that of the Sussexes its appearance has been the subject of lengthy negotiations since 1953 when the British asked for its loan to mark Queen Elizabeth's Coronation. Finally, after years of futile diplomacy and following Brexit, President Macron and King Charles agreed that the loan of the Tapestry would strengthen ties between our two countries. Closure of the Bayeux Museum for renovation before the 1000th anniversary of the birth of William the Conqueror gave the ideal opportunity for secure storage and display in England.

Vrai ou faux?

1. The French call The Bayeux Tapestry La Tapisserie de la Reine Mathilde suggesting that it was commissioned by William's wife Mathilda and possibly created in Winchester or Canterbury by Benedictine nuns at the request of Bishop Odo of Bayeux, half-brother of William. When he returned to France he took the Tapestry with him.
 2. It is not correctly a tapestry but an embroidery as a tapestry is woven and traditionally hung on a wall. Its base of 9 panels is linen and the threads are wool coloured with natural dyes. The needles were probably made from bone or antler.
 3. Figures include 623 men, 190 horses, 35 dogs but only 6 women.
 4. It is 70 metres long and displayed in the longest display cabinet in the world.
 5. It is insured while in England by the Treasury for an estimated £800 million.
 6. Up to 1 million visitors are expected to see it at the British Museum.
 7. There was a dummy run of its transportation via the Channel Tunnel and also its installation in the Museum.
 8. Bletchley Park played a part in its preservation. During World War 2 its operators learned that the Nazis were intending to remove the Tapestry to Germany. French Resistance fighters were contacted and were able to hide it in the basement of the Louvre.
 9. There is a copy of the Tapestry in Reading Museum. Viewing would be less crowded, less expensive but a lot less exciting.
- All true!

We met again on September 11th, a smaller group than normal as members were still on holiday. We are keeping our fingers crossed for good autumn weather next week.



**Music Enjoyment – Geoff Davis
Sue Clements**

Wednesday 14 October 2026 10:00-noon at Fort Stamford



The Passions of Vaughan Williams

Ralph Vaughan Williams was born on 12 October 1872 in the Cotswold village of Down Ampsey. Educated at Charter-house School, he was a pioneer travelling into the countryside to collect folk songs and carols from singers. He took three years off his age to volunteer for the army during WW1, a factor that influenced his music afterwards. His musical output was prolific, including nine symphonies, five operas, film music and other genres. He died on 26 August 1958.

Vaughan Williams' life is presented in a documentary filmed by John Bridcut released by Crux Productions in 2018, featuring performances by the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by the late Richard Hickox.

10:00 *Vaughan Williams* part 1
10:45 Interval
11:00 *Vaughan Williams* part 2
11:45 Discussion

Please allow time to
order interval refresh-
ments from the bar
before 10:00 start.

Meetings on the 2nd
Wednesday of the
month. P&D u3a
members

* * *

Wednesday 11 November 2026, 10:00-noon at Fort Stamford



In Search of Beethoven

Beethoven started composing his 3rd Symphony (Eroica) in 1803, inspired by the French Revolution and his admiration for Napoleon Bonaparte's sweeping reforms. This changed to fury when Bonaparte declared himself Emperor of Austria in 1804 while Beethoven lived in Vienna.

The first part of Beethoven's life featured in our July programme. This next part follows his works until his death in 1827.

Vivaldi's Gloria

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) almost certainly composed this Gloria for the girls at Ospedale della Pietà, a home for abandoned children in Venice in the early 18th century. Rediscovered in late 1920's, this work has become the most popular of Vivaldi's vocal works and is sung here by Schola Pietatis Antonio Vivaldi.

10:00 *In Search of Beethoven*
10:50 Interval
11:05 *Vivaldi's Gloria*
11:35 Discussion
12:00 End

Christmassy suggestions for our December programme invited.

Geoff Davis

Local History - Pauleen Stewart
Jean Lyons

Walking Tour of Compton

Ten intrepid members met on 15 September at Plymouth Croquet Club to be guided by the excellent Richard Fisher around Upper and Lower Compton. The area has a rich history being mentioned in the Domesday Book when Compton was a small farmstead with another 12 cottages. In the Civil War the inhabitants were on the side of the Royalists and Prince Maurice was one of the leaders hence the pub of that name in the vicinity.

Richard always researches his tours thoroughly and they are a joy to take part in. I am hoping to book him again next year for another interesting walk.

Photo, Pearn House Trust formerly Pearn Convalescent Home which we were allowed in to admire the architecture and grounds.

Pauleen



Walking, Short – Norman Bealing

On 11 September walkers enjoyed good weather on our circular 5.5 mile walk from The Staddy passing old Staddiscombe and Down Thomas on our way to Bovisand for a refreshment stop. Afterwards we returned via Bovisand Lane to The Staddy.

On 16 September eleven of us followed Chris, the Chairman, from Leeden Tor along the old railway line and into Peek Hill plantation. Walking along the Devonport leat as far as Stanlake Farm, then up a track towards the cars at Leeden Tor car park.

Norman



Walking Medium Distance - Pam Kingsland

The Medium Walk group had a most interesting walk from Mary Tavy in September. We walked up onto the moor to visit Wheal Jewel. This still supplies water to the hydroelectric plant at Peter Tavy. Next to Hill Bridge with its lovely weir and salmon leap, and then beside a leat to Horndon. From there the signpost says it is just a mile back to the cars. This one mile contains the most difficult ladder stiles - we couldn't agree how many of them there were! The final stile takes you into the churchyard at Mary Tavy and past William Crossing's grave-stone. The final touch was to find the church warden in the church who showed us the Pinwell carvings - we all know about them of course - and the unique stained glass. Thank you Alan for a great walk.

If you would like more information about our walks and how to join us do please contact me, details above.

Pam



Here we are in action!



Reading Group – Mary Gaskins Joan Sene

Once again we have enjoyed, or have been interested in, a varied selection of books.

In July we read *The Great Gatsby*, which we all decided was based on the rather sad life of the author Scott Fitzgerald. If you were rich in America in the 1920s life was lavish - the poor were ignored.

Our September book was *Flappy Entertains*. Once again the rich ruled, this time in a Devon village. Flappy was Queen of the village until Hedda Harvey-Smith moved into the biggest house in the village. Read on!

October we will be reading *The Island of Missing Trees*. This involves the civil war in Cyprus, between the Turks and the Greeks.

November we move on from the island of Cyprus to Ireland, reading *Small Things Like These*. A lovely family story which also tells us of the hardships of unmarried mothers.

December our book is *The Coffin Road* by Peter May.

We have had some good discussions about the books. It is quite good if not everyone enjoys the read, as it makes us think about it from a different perspective.

We are all enjoying these last few days of summer and doing jobs in the garden. When we can no longer work outside we will be reading and getting ideas for next year's books.

Mary



Rummikub - Mo Baker Joan Sene



Alternate Mondays, our small group gathers at the Billacombe just after 14:00 for a little community time and brain exercise!

We welcome new members, and are very happy to coach the entry level too. It's not difficult, similar to the Rummy game we played in past times, but using tiles, to build sets and runs. It's fun, if you have a spare 90 mins or so, come check us out!

Meet dates for October will be 12 and 26, and then 9 and 23 in November.

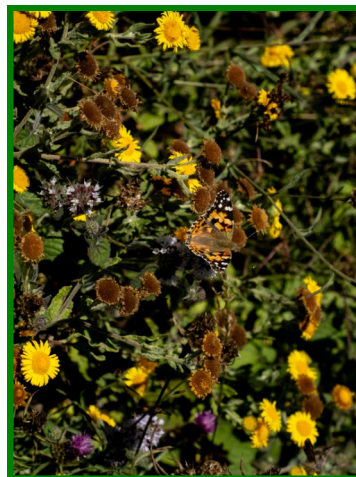
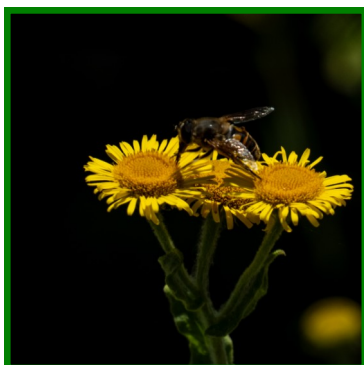
Contact details above for all enquiries.

Natural History - Peter Scott

Our August meeting was at Andrews Wood near Loddiswell. Despite near drought conditions, this area was fairly green due to a stream running down to woodland , and the slopes still having colour from some hardy plants. The conditions evidently suited butterflies as there were many varieties in large numbers. Andrews Wood is a special site managed by Devon Wildlife Trust and we were fortunate to be shown a rare heath lobelia by a volunteer.

Hazel Scott

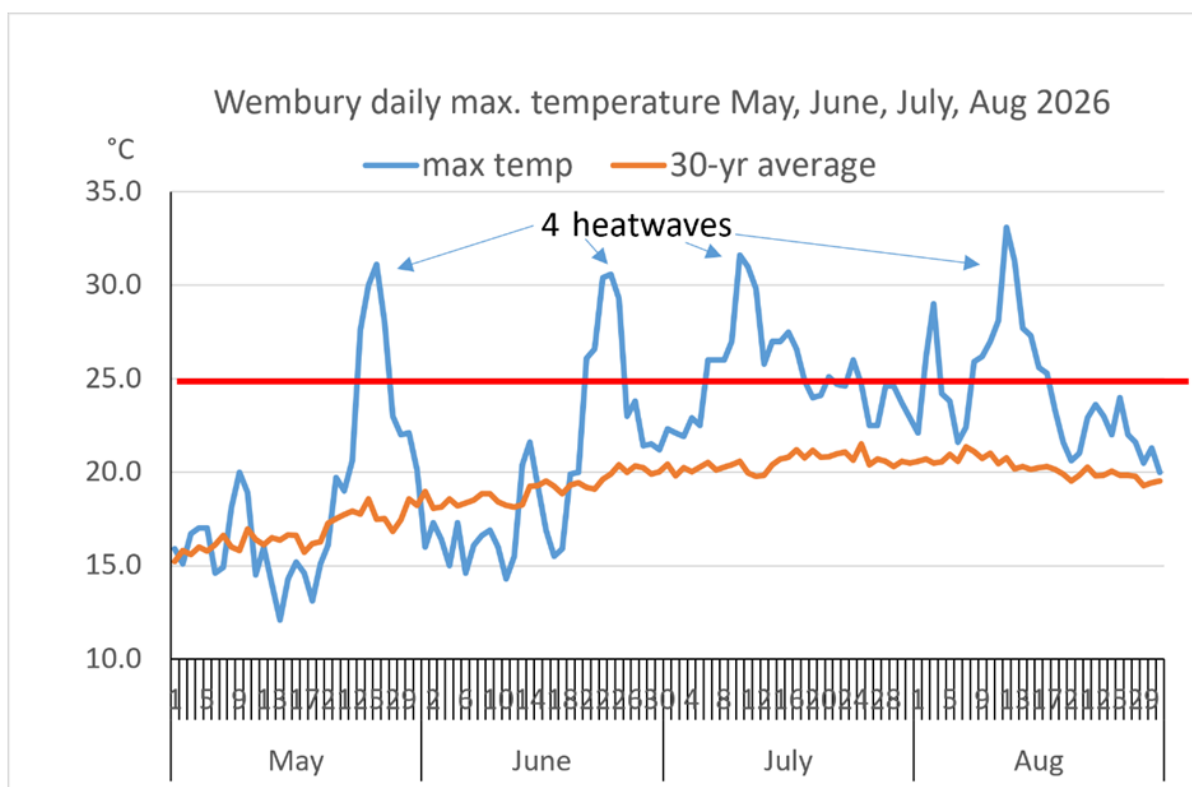
There was no meeting in September but for October a visit to Calstock is proposed.



Weather and Climate - Len Wood

Wembury Summer 2026

The graph below says it all as regards the high temperatures we had in Wembury during the summer. Four heatwaves, as defined by the temperature exceeding the 25°C threshold for 3 or more consecutive days, and the temperature staying above average throughout July and August. It was a record warm summer (JJA) in my record going back to 1986, beating the previous warmest in 2022. The highest temperature reached 33.1°C on 12 August and we had 8 days with 30°C exceeded. Drought conditions developed with rainfall almost non-existent in July with only 2.1 mm. The rain did not really return until the last week of August leaving the grassy countryside and gardens looking brown. The summer (JJA) as a whole had 121 mm which was 57% of the long term 30-yr average and turned out as the 4th driest over the last 41 years in Wembury. It was not as dry as 65 mm in 1995, or for those with long memories, 1976 with 55 mm at Plymouth Mount Batten.



Singing For Fun – Shirley Hammond
Gunnevi Wood

QUICK NOTICE:

Singing for Fun has temporarily moved to **Wednesday**.

Photography - Phil Mitchell
Pat Green

We have been busy over the past two months and August saw us looking for "Flowing Water". Consequently, a small number of members went to Radford Park to shelter from the extreme heat (which seems a distant memory now that autumn is here) and took inspiration from the little stream that runs through the wooded area of the park. Then afterwards were able to retire to The Radford Bird Hide, that is opposite the park on the corner of White Ladies Road, for a coffee and chat, thanks to the kindness of the Friends of Radford Wood who look after the building and let us use it.

The resulting slide show later in August, include pictures from Radford lake, waterfalls from around the world, assorted fountains and stunning breakers on the seashore.

Then at the beginning of September a select few members went to Cadover Bridge on a very cool overcast day to take photos "In the Country". While we were there a number of sheep and ponies kept us company.

Then on the way home we stopped off for a welcome coffee and sausage bap to revive us. The meeting at the rugby club at the end of September was extremely well attended and we enjoyed more than 60 photos. These included pictures of canal boats in leafy tow paths, an Irish road with verges filled with masses of red crocosmia, fences with styles and freshly ploughed fields providing dramatic patterns in the red Devon soil.

Our topic for October will be "Autumn Colour" which should give rise to a vivid and colourful show at the end of October. So, 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

'In the Country'



Family History Groups 1 and 2 – Janet Henwood

The two groups didn't meet in August as I was celebrating a special birthday - you know, one of those with a nought in it.

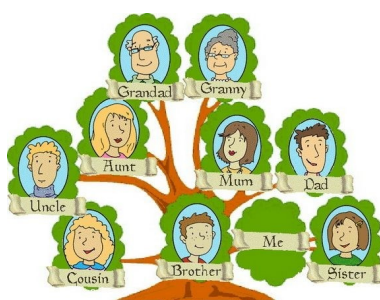
Instead, my school friend, who has her birthday three days before me, and I had a joint party at my house with our long time family history friends and I also invited the members of my two groups and some past members. The weather was glorious and we spilled out into the garden and generally the topic of conversation was family history. In addition to my husband there were just two gents and they were both from the same area of Durham, so they were happy chatting together. It was a truly wonderful day and enjoyed by everyone.

* * *

Two people left the groups recently and I was ready to advise that I could accept a new member to each group. As luck would have it I had two people asking to join or be placed on a waiting list. After meeting each person before our group meeting, they came along on the 7 September and joined us. They enjoyed the sessions and were welcomed by everyone. I look forward to getting back into our family history sessions during the coming months and I hope that the group members will progress with their research.

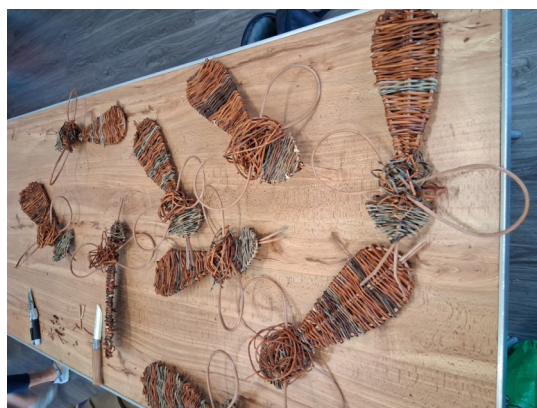
The meetings will resume to their usual day of the 3rd Monday of the month.

Janet Henwood



Crafts & Textiles – Wendy Whiteman Kate Payton

It's been a really busy summer with various new activities. The Craft Group Enjoyed a Willow Weaving Workshop provided by a South Hams Artist. Well, I say enjoyed, it was a good upper body workout and not as easy as it looked! We tried our hand at wire sculpture, which I think proved popular. We are now concentrating on Christmas, which is fast approaching and hope to have a variety of gifts available at the November u3a General Meeting.



Wendy

Away Day - Widecombe Fair 8 September 2026

We arrived by coach at 10:15 and the weather was misty and damp. Good fortune was on our side and by the time we had finished our coffee break, the skies had cleared and we enjoyed good weather for the remainder of the day.

Widecombe Fair is traditionally held on the first Tuesday in September. It is organised and run by volunteers, raising money for local good causes. Despite the decision to cancel sheep and cattle events due to blue tongue, there were many attractions and events to enjoy. The village centre was lively with cafés and stalls selling homemade products and plants and displays of woodturning and willow weaving. The music and dancing from the Morris Dancers and the Town Crier competition (based on volume with clarity criteria) made for a vibrant atmosphere. The stroll from the village to the Main Field took only a few minutes. There were many more stalls including jewellery, pottery, clothes, crafts, local produce and food outlets.

The Beer Tent was particularly busy, with people enjoying live entertainment from singers and musicians. In another Tent, a variety of crafts, fresh vegetables, home grown produce and beautiful flowers were on display waiting to be judged. The outdoor events offered a fantastic variety of entertainment, including the Axe Team and Lumberjack Show, a family dog show, a parade of vintage cars and tractors, horse and pony competitions, as well as many other traditional activities.

This annual Fair is a social opportunity for the farming and local community to meet and to display and demonstrate their rural skills. The appearance of the famous and popular Uncle Tom Copley riding his grey mare was an exciting feature of the day, with many people taking photographs and chatting to Uncle Tom! The Fair has so much to offer. Spending the day in Widecombe in the heart of Dartmoor was very enjoyable and like stepping back in time. We hope you enjoy the lovely photographs taken on the day.



Agility **Dog** in action

Watching the Agility Dogs



Widcombe Fair continued:



Part of the Austin Seven
display



Farm Machinery



Public learning Morris
Dancing



Shire Horses in the main display ring



Uncle Tom Cobley
With
Morris Dancers

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

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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



Well, our weather is comfortably cooler now which is pleasing for many of us. Greenwich Mean Time is fast approaching so no doubt we will be thinking of cosy evenings. No need to feel isolated during the months to come because we are fortunate, of course, to have our many u3a group meetings to enjoy.

We now have the possibility of a new group - Qi Gong - which sounds exciting. Why not show your interest and see what it's all about - I have asked Richard Harvey to add my name to his list - see page 3 of this Newsletter.

Another **extremely** important point for the continuance of our precious u3a is of course for somebody (out of our vast membership) to come forward to 'shadow' our Treasurer, Nick Hammond, with a view to taking on the role when Nick, according to u3a rules, has to stand down. Please give some thought to this - see our Chair's note on page 1.

The next Newsletter will be in December but you can always go to our website to see all the up to date information you will ever need thanks to Web Manager Paul.

See you soon, all the best *Jan*

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