

## Chat from the Chair



Friday 13<sup>th</sup> January was a good day for us with the best weather of the week after days with heavy rain. A small group of us gathered at the top of the multi user path just off the Exeter Road and made our way along the path to plant 10 heritage fruit trees, including local varieties such as 'Exeter Cross' and 'Devon Star' on National Trust land at Lower Halsdon Farm. With thanks to National Trust volunteers it is wonderful to know that u3a members, the local community and visitors will be able to enjoy these trees for many years to come, watching the changes through the seasons.

Steve Naylor, East Devon Countryside Ranger, National Trust, said "Traditional orchards and the blossom they bring create valuable early nectar sources for insects which are often foraging for scarce resources in the early spring. Trees have an amazing ability to provide space to breathe and relax, provide a home for nature to thrive and allow us to lock up carbon. We are grateful to the u3a in Exmouth for donating the fruit trees which have been planted along the footpath on Lower Halsdon Farm". Please see page 7.

Looking back over the last year we have celebrated ten years in many different ways, by creating a special tenth anniversary quilt with funds being directed towards improving accessibility for u3a members, holding coffee mornings, joining special cruises with Stuart Line Cruises and entertainment in Exmouth Pavilion by and for the members. The year started with a generous donation by one of the members for 100 trees in the Brecon Beacons as part of a national u3a woodland and ending with the planting of the ten fruit trees. With many thanks to our Committee, Social Committee and members who gave their time and skills to make all of this possible.

Since last May we have been in contact with you with regard to our AGM in Exmouth Pavilion on Thursday morning 11<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Please see the Save the Date poster on page 3.

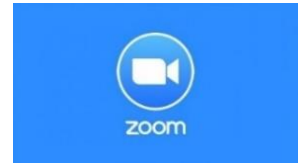
Thank you to those members who have responded by saying that they are willing to support our committee. Recently you will have received emails from Lyn Holmes, John Hunt and Steve Rixon with specific requests about ways in which you can help. Please do come forward to help our wonderful u3a thrive and flourish. It is a great way to develop your skills, to get involved with different projects and to make friends.

Best wishes

*Christine,  
Chair*

## Our monthly meetings

In the middle of a cold winter, do join us every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month to hear interesting speakers, many on local topics, but also to meet up with old friends over a cup of coffee in the café and make new ones. Our meeting itself **starts at 10.15 for 10.30.** and they are also being streamed live on Zoom.



Since our last Newsletter, we have had two excellent talks, reviews of which are in this newsletter – please see page 10.

Looking ahead, on **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February, Candy Adkins** will be giving a talk about her mother, **Jackie Moggridge, a pioneering pilot** who learned to fly in South Africa in her teens. War broke out when she was 19 and she then joined the Air Transport Auxiliary, ferrying aircraft where needed. This is an amazing story of an extraordinary woman. Her autobiography is entitled *Spitfire Girl* and will be on sale at this meeting.

On **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March**, John Wilding will be speaking about **“Rewilding”**, a topic much discussed recently given the decline of so many natural species and habitats.

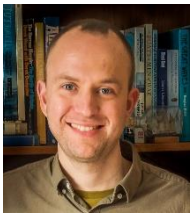
There is again the opportunity for members to see our speakers **via Zoom** for anyone who is unwilling or unable to attend in person and instead prefers to join us from home (or from anywhere else in the world!). Zoom connection details are on the next page.



Please note these dates in your diaries and I do hope to see as many of you as possible at these talks. It is very helpful to hear from you if there are subjects that you would especially like to hear about or if you have heard speakers you would recommend.

**Ann Newby**  
**Speakers' Coordinator**  
[speakers@exmouthu3a.org.uk](mailto:speakers@exmouthu3a.org.uk)

## Meetings on Zoom

Guest presenter: 'Connect and Learn' presentation via Zoom – Thursday 23 February				
Thurs 23 <sup>rd</sup> Feb 10:15 for 10:30 to 11:30	Dr. Laurence Chittock 	'Electric Vehicles: What's All the Fuss?'	Over the next few decades electricity is set to become the dominant fuel in our cars with the sale of new petrol and diesel cars to be banned from 2030 onwards.  But why is this necessary? What will be the main considerations when you choose your next car? And what are the biggest challenges on the road to electrification?	Dr. Laurence Chittock – an expert in transport planning and electric vehicle infrastructure will present his thoughts on this topic based on experiences from a range of projects in both the transport and electricity sector. Inputs and discussion from the audience on the positives and negatives of the transition will be keenly welcomed.

In addition to streaming the monthly meeting on Zoom and our guest presenter on 23 February, everyone is very welcome to join us on other Thursdays for our **Zoom Coffee & Chat sessions**. They start at 10.30, but we suggest everyone logs in from 10.15, and it will be for about an hour. They are open to all our members and are a good opportunity for a chat. You may have something you would like to share, particularly any activities you have participated in as a group member or any topic which might be of interest to others. So why not make yourself a cup of coffee or tea and join us then; you will be most welcome. The Zoom connection details are in the box below. And if you want to receive a reminder email about this the day before, please email me so that I can add you to our circulation list – [newsletter@exmouthu3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@exmouthu3a.org.uk).

The dates for our next Zoom Coffee & Chat sessions are **Thursday 2 February** and **Thursday 16 February**.

**The Zoom connection details** for the monthly meetings, for the Zoom presentations, for our Zoom Coffee & Chat sessions and for our other u3a Zoom meetings remain the same as before, and are as shown in the edition of the newsletter sent direct to members.

This is for u3a members only, so please don't share these Zoom details with anyone else. If you experience difficulties, email John Hunt at [johnh@exmouthu3a.org.uk](mailto:johnh@exmouthu3a.org.uk).

## Exmouth & District u3a AGM: Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> May – Save the Date

**Exmouth & District u3a AGM**  
**Thurs 11<sup>th</sup> May 2023**  
10:00 for 10:30 – 11:00

**SAVE THE DATE**

**Post AGM Show**  
**11:00 – 11:45**  
**by Ian Bateman**  
FRPS MPAGB AV – AFIAP APAGB

**U3A Post-AGM AV Show**

Following our AGM on 11th May, Ian Bateman will once more entertain us with a selection of his Audio-Visual shows. Some will be of local interest, some will be brand new, and some will be favourites that have been requested by our members.

**THE BEACH**  
A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

**Holloway**

**The Chapel, the Devil**  
and the Bar of Soap

**CITY OF DARKNESS**

**TWO CIRCLES**

**CORADOUR**

**The Door**

## Group news

The groups have still been functioning even though we have had such a cold month. We have a couple of new groups:

- **Samba & Bolivia**

Samba and Bolivia are advanced versions of the card game Canasta. We will play alternate Friday afternoons at the Railway Club starting at 2 p.m. on Friday 10th February. Initially we will only be playing with people who play these games already but will hope to teach others who want to learn at a later date.

If you need any more information, please let me know Ruth Pierson by email.

- **New Tap-Dancing Group for Beginners**

A great way to keep fit and have fun – classes will be under the expert tuition of Tracey Hamilton (Danzing Unlimited and Exmouth Youth Theatre) who will teach you how to ‘shuffle ball change’ and ‘pick up’ to your heart’s content. All to wonderful music – and no partner needed.

The class will take place every Monday morning from 10 – 11 am, venue probably central Exmouth, **cost £6.00 per class payable in advance, or £8.00 per session, pay as you go.**

If you are interested, please contact Jan Harper Shea by email for further details and to put your name down for this exciting new group.

## Groups with vacancies

- **Canasta**
- **Connect & Learn:** for details see the December newsletter or the groups section of our u3a website, or take a look at our own dedicated Connect & Learn website – <https://sites.google.com/view/connectandlearn>
- **Mixed Media Art Group:** This lively group meets every Wednesday morning to do art. We use any media e.g. pastels, watercolours, acrylics, inks. If you would like to find out more, please contact Janet Ash by email.
- **Spanish conversation intermediate**
- **Weather Groups**
- **Zoom Short Films Group:** Join us as a guest on Wednesday 8th February: 7pm to about 9pm for the short film discussion...delight in the variety; a visual feast. Email Lesley Stacy-Marks and she will send you the Zoom link.



**Note: Brush up German Groups are now full.**

## Local Hub Groups

Listed below are our local hub groups where you can go for a coffee and chat and meet local u3a members. Please contact the local organiser for information or just go along to the meeting where you will be made very welcome. If you would like to start a new hub group please contact me.

- Budleigh Salterton and surrounding areas: Alice Robson  
Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday monthly (to be arranged).
- Exmouth – Dagmar Road area (bordered by The Beacon, Louisa Terrace, Trefusis Terrace and Rolle Road): Sally Parnell
- Exmouth – Littleham area: Susan Hall  
meets on various days and times, so please email Susan for further information
- Exmouth – Mount Pleasant area: Anne Howard
- Exmouth – Rivermead Road area: Nicola Antoni  
Nicola and Anne have joined together. The group normally meets at Greenfingers on a Tuesday am. Please email for information.
- Exmouth – Shelly Road, Camperdown Terrace and The Marina: Victoria Newhouse
- Exmouth – Salterton Road and The Avenues area, email Jan Harper Shea
- Exmouth – Withycombe area: Jan Collett  
The Withycombe meeting is at Bumble and Tee in Phear Park on Tuesdays, 2-4pm fortnightly.
- Ottery St Mary area: Ronnie Harwood
- Topsham area:  
Topsham and District Hub will now meet twice a month on a drop-in basis on the first Thursday in the cafe at St Bridget's Nursery, Sidmouth Road, Clyst St Mary between 12.00 and 4.00 pm and on the third Monday at Nancy Potter House, Nelson Close, Topsham between 10.00am and 2.00 pm. All u3a members are welcome.
- Woodbury, Woodbury Salterton and East Budleigh: Lin Milsom-Ashby  
Next meets on 14 February at the Maltsters Arms.



*Lyn Holmes,*  
*Groups Coordinator*  
[groups@exmouthu3a.org.uk](mailto:groups@exmouthu3a.org.uk)



*Sunset from behind Exmouth Pavilion – Photo by John Hunt*

## Social Committee News

Well 2023 is ahead and the Social Committee have several plans for events which they are exploring on behalf of our u3a.

It is difficult to ascertain any specific details regarding the trips at this time of year so although enquiries are ongoing there are no named trips that we can include in this newsletter. But we would like to say that by March it is sincerely hoped that you can be made aware of what will be available and when bookings can take place. As you already know, the first outing on 20<sup>th</sup> February which is the bird-watching boat trip, is fully booked with a short waiting list of names.

On a less positive note, it has been drawn to The Beacon Hotel's attention that there was considerable disappointment expressed, by many members, with the standard of the Christmas Meal which took place on 8<sup>th</sup> December last. The Social Committee would like to reassure you that much inclusive discussion will occur during this coming year as to arrangements for this 2023's Christmas get-together – much more news of this will be forthcoming in due course. As disappointing as this event was for members, for the Social Committee it was even more so as such a lot of pre-planning and organisation goes into this one pre-Christmas event. But we're never daunted so will not give up on future planning.



Finally, although we are one month into a New Year, may we re-iterate our wishes to you all for a happy and healthy 2023.

Regards from all on the Social Committee.

*Alice Robson, Lyn Holmes, Clare Dawson and Jenny Comben*  
*Social Committee*

## Remember 5<sup>th</sup> November?



*Photo collage by Christine Chittock*

## 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Planting of 10 Heritage Fruit Trees



*Photo collage and photo below by Christine Chittock*

There is also an article about this in the Exmouth Journal. You can read this by clicking or tapping on this link: <https://www.exmouthjournal.co.uk/news/23280368.exmouth-u3a-plant-tree-celebrate-10-year-anniversary/>



## News from the Groups – Bird Group 1 in December

The main event for the group on 12th December was a Christmas lunch at The George & Dragon at Topsham which was attended by 14 group members. Before the lunch, 7 of us braved the very cold weather to do a circular walk from Dart's Farm via Bowling Green Marsh, the Goat Walk and Topsham Quay. Given the cold we were entitled to be rewarded with some success on the birding front and all in all, we did pretty well!



At Bowling Green Marsh, we enjoyed reasonably close views of three Snipe but everything else was quite distant as all the water nearer to the road and hide was completely frozen but even at distance, Pintail and Shoveler stood out well in the weak sunshine and a Marsh Harrier came in from the river, did a circular fly past over the marsh and back again. At the Goat Walk with the tide just beginning to fall away, we enjoyed close views of Dunlin, Turnstone, Avocets, Black Tailed Godwits and Common Redshank. At Topsham Quay, Black Tailed Godwits, some Teal and arguably the star of the show, a Spotted Redshank really close to the quayside and posing for photos in exemplary fashion! On the way back to Dart's Farm, we saw a large group of Wigeon on the River Clyst, in the frosty fields below Dart's Farm a large group of Brent Geese with a few Lapwing also present and finally, a Lesser Black Backed Gull on one of its favourite lamp posts just by Dart's.

A cold but rewarding walk – lunch in a warm pub well earned!

*John Swain, Group member (who also took the photos)*



## News from the Groups – Bird Group 1 in January

Twelve of us met up at Stover Country Park on 16<sup>th</sup> January for a leisurely walk around the lake.

Before starting the walk there were a few Goldcrests and Coal Tits in the car park area. Whilst not as productive as can sometimes be the case, we saw at least 26 species including the usual woodland birds some of which offered very close views.

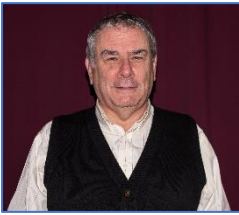
Generally, the birds are well used to human presence at Stover and can be very confiding – one of the easiest places locally to get close to Nuthatches which were all over the place.



On the lake, a pair of Little Grebe close to the path were nice to see but only one Mandarin Duck was found.

*John Swain,  
Group member  
(who also took the photos)*

## Review of 'Christmas in Devon' by Dr Todd Gray in Exmouth Pavilion



On Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December Dr Todd Gray gave us a talk on Christmas customs, not only in Devon but also more generally. As always, Todd's research for his talk was based on primary sources from the relevant period, including, in this instance, seventeenth century lists of ingredients and guests for East Devon Christmas meals, as well as slides of the nativity scenes in Victorian stained-glass windows or pre-Reformation carved screens in Devon churches, or even above a fireplace in a home.

The main focus of the talk, however, was the changing nature of our celebration of Christmas. Although the actual date was fixed in Rome, probably in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, it is change that is needed to keep a custom alive. In our own times, we have seen the introduction of displays of Christmas lights, the Queen's speech and even Black Friday. On the other hand, we have lost the Boxing Day hunt and Christmas cards and Christmas lights are less popular and may die out because of cost. The way Christmas was celebrated depended through the centuries on the religious and social circumstances at the time. With the introduction of Protestantism and then later Puritanism, some customs died out. An example of this was 'Hogmers', those groups of men going from house to house singing and dancing to raise money for the church. The Puritans considered it profane to dance.

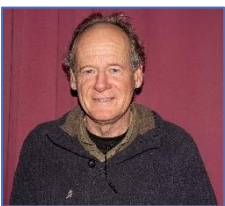
The later tradition of mummers, who dressed up and went round to houses acting largely died out in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century but, interestingly, survives in Newfoundland. A rare document from 1738 with a record of some of the words used was found in Silverton. This tradition was replaced by local village pantomimes.

On the darker side, there was no pay for the poor on Christmas Day, they would wear rags to go and beg at the door of the gentry a few days before as 'mumpers', a demeaning act for them. Todd ended his talk with a comparison of prosperous times in 2000, when his book was written and the then sense of entitlement, with today when economising is back and children will get less this year. It is a time to be happy with what you get, not what you deserve.

Todd kindly agreed to let us put the recording of his presentation on our YouTube channel – just click or tap on this link to watch this at any time: <https://youtu.be/ExnwFD-Vtv8>

*Ann Newby, Speakers' Coordinator*

## Review of 'Wildlife of Devon from shore to Moor' by John Walters



On Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January John Walters, artist, photographer and freelance ecologist gave us a talk that opened my eyes to the breadth and complexity of the wildlife here in Devon and also to the depth of my own ignorance. John fascinated us with slides and short videos of, for example, a humpback whale off Slapton Sands, Atlantic blue fin tuna off Start Point, jumping salmon at Castle Drogo or dancing adders on Pebblebed Heaths. Who knew that the Maer was the place to find the pantaloone bee or the cuckoo bee?

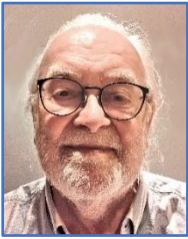
John originally trained at Falmouth as an artist and he brought with him many examples of his drawings, which we were able to see on the screen and buy in card form. He has also been involved as photographer on many wildlife programmes, which have been familiar to us over the years.

This was a talk that engrossed and fascinated the audience but is impossible to do justice to in words. However, John very kindly agreed to allow his talk to be put on our own YouTube site ([https://youtu.be/FTG\\_COmDQQM](https://youtu.be/FTG_COmDQQM)) and his website ([www.johnwalters.co.uk](http://www.johnwalters.co.uk)) also contains information, pictures and links, so I would encourage anyone who missed it to visit our site. Many thanks again to John. We hope that you will visit and fascinate us again in the future.

*Ann Newby, Speakers' Coordinator*

*Photos by Christine Chittock*

## Review of 'Heroic Failures' by Ian McLauchlin via Zoom on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023

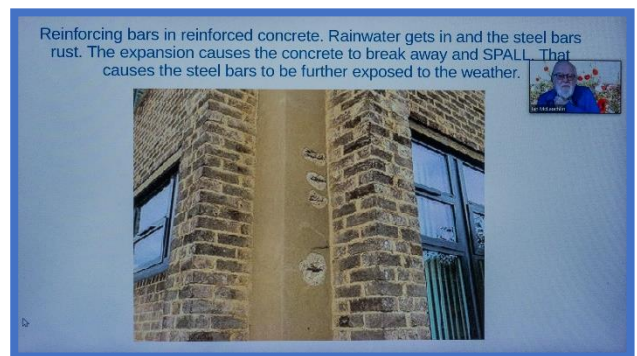


27 members (with a number of couples) logged on to watch Ian's fascinating presentation, covering a complex subject which Ian handled so well as represented in the comments we received. *"Brilliance in action! Thank you very much for such an illuminating talk this morning. I thoroughly enjoyed it."*; *"I did enjoy this morning Ian, Thanks."* *"Your talk was a new subject to me and I learned some basics with the help of your clever diagrams. Thank you."*; *"A thank you for a most interesting and thought-provoking presentation yesterday. I really enjoyed it."*

Before Thursday I had not seen the presentation and in my introduction I explained that Ian is able to think outside the box, is curious about why things happen and how things work or don't work. Also that he loves collecting data and producing graphs. Ian certainly lived up to my expectations and those of our regular 'Zoomers' and his talk had attracted a couple of members with an interest in engineering and it ticked the box for them too.

Ian started with the Tacoma Narrows Bridge disaster of 1940 and although it was designed to be the most flexible bridge ever, it didn't stand up to high winds, swaying considerably and collapsing into the estuary below. The good thing about inspirational talks such as Ian's is that it often leads you to find out more and I discovered that 'the remains of the bridge are still at the bottom of Puget Sound, where they form one of the largest man-made reefs in the world.'

Ian also covered another bridge disaster that of the Dee Bridge; a rail accident with five fatalities in 1847 leading to an examination of cast iron and its use in the mid nineteenth century and highlighted by Ian. Shown by a useful diagram showing a crystal lattice and leading on to another diagram with metals under stress, dislocations and how they appear under a microscope. Throughout his presentation Ian took us through each disaster with helpful diagrams and charts examining the strength of materials and how they respond to stress.



Ian gave us a useful example, that of the de Havilland Comet in 1954 with stress concentration of sharp corners around the windows clearly seen in a photo of the aircraft windows after the accident and a diagram supplied by Ian. Pointing out that the cabin pressurisation and depressurisation certainly had its effect on the windows due to their poor design.

Ian mentioned that the weather always wins, however hard you try to stop it. As seen in a photo he took at Nottingham University showing reinforcing bars in reinforced concrete. "Rainwater gets in and the steel bars rust. The expansion causes the concrete to break away and SPALL. That causes the steel bars to be further exposed to the weather."

It is difficult in a short review to do justice to such an excellent presentation covering a variety of disasters and their causes. Not only did Ian give us a superb talk but he also covered a variety of questions answering so well, covering complicated subject material. Thank you Ian.

I thoroughly recommend watching Ian's presentation on our YouTube site <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjwTvMiCqvk>

*Review by Christine Chittock, Chair*

## Trends in Christmas cards over the years

Ian McLauchlin also gave those of us who were able to join the last Zoom Coffee & Chat session in December a brilliant talk about trends in Christmas Cards received over the years. This sparked a wide-ranging discussion about charities, economics and Modern Monetary Theory. You can see a recording of this on our own YouTube channel by clicking or tapping on this link - <https://youtu.be/e4DaESmjTU0>

## Community news – Exmouth Art Trail

For more information please  
Email  
[seadogarttrail@gmail.com](mailto:seadogarttrail@gmail.com)  
or pop to Sea Dog Art  
Gallery on Beacon Hill  
Exmouth. We are running  
informal meet ups 6:30 pm  
every first and second  
Thursday of the month.




The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls. Picasso





## The Exmouth Art Trail is back!



Sea Dog Art Gallery and the Exmouth Town Council are hoping to engage clubs, schools, homes and individuals in Exmouth.

We want a fun unique experience that unites the town. We would love you to be involved.

The trail will be part of this years Exmouth festival which takes place late July. The theme is fish let your imagination go wild! You are welcome to create your own display, performance, activity what ever suits you. You could support one of the displays already being planned, perhaps the walk in whale or the 3D aquarium that is 100 meters long?

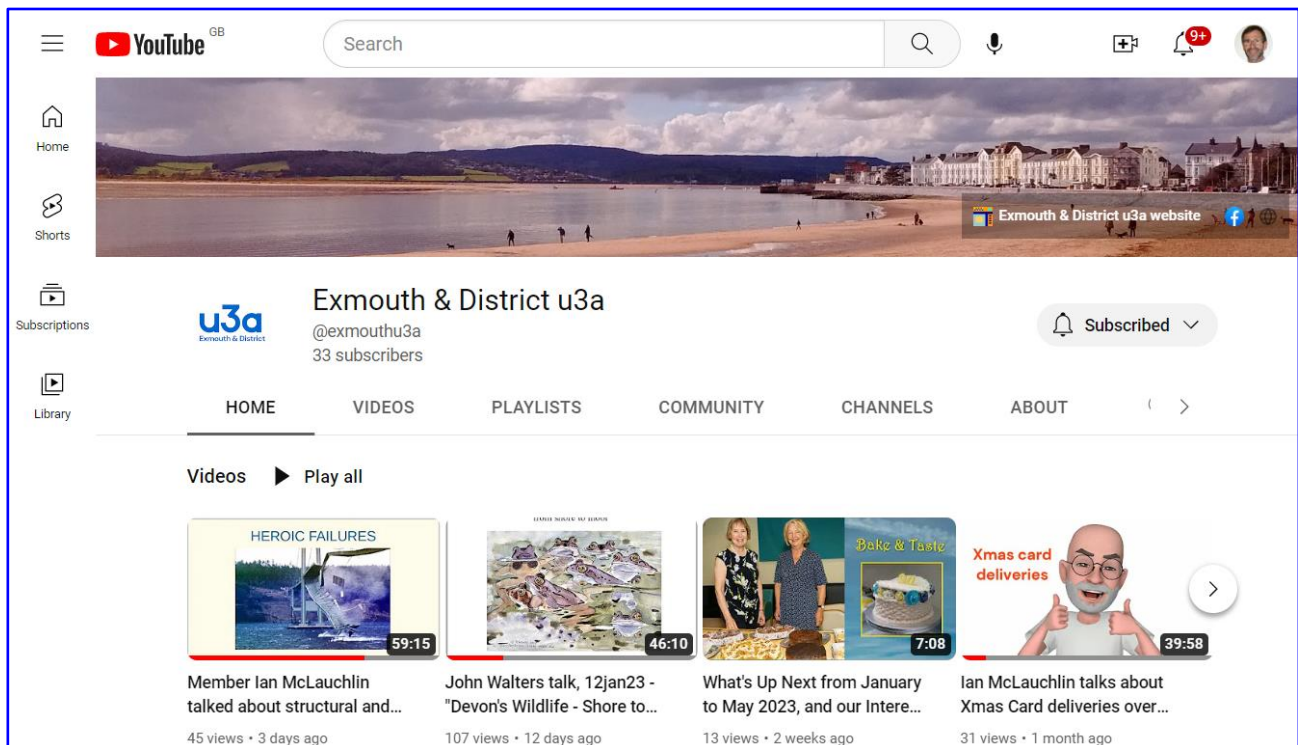
For anyone interested in this, please come along to a meeting at 6.30 pm on Thursday 2 February at Anna Fitzgerald's Sea Dog Art Gallery (Temple Winds, Beacon Hill, Exmouth, EX8 1PB), or email Lesley Stacy-Marks

## Exmouth & District u3a online – our digital world

Here's a reminder of all our online resources. We have such a lot to offer all members, so why not find time to take a look! What do you think? How can you contribute? Please let me know (email address below).

- Our Exmouth & District u3a website: <https://u3asites.org.uk/exmouth/home>
- Our u3a YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@exmouthu3a>
- Our u3a Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/exmouthU3A>
- Our u3a Connect & Learn website: <https://sites.google.com/view/connectandlearn>, and see especially our u3a What's On guide at <https://sites.google.com/view/connectandlearn/whats-on>

Here are the four most recent videos posted on our YouTube channel. Have you seen any of them yet?



## Our next edition

I hope you have enjoyed reading this newsletter, and a big thank you to our contributors this month. Would you like to contribute anything for our next newsletter in March? Photos and articles about anything that has happened in your groups would be especially welcome, and photos, art, short articles and stories and poems from more members would be really appreciated. The deadline for receipt of copy for this next edition is **Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023**. Please contact me using the email address below.



Thank you very much.

**John Hunt**  
**Newsletter Editor**  
[newsletter@exmouthu3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@exmouthu3a.org.uk)