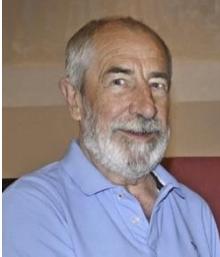




Chat from the Chair



Spring at last! Daffodils, snowdrops, primroses, nesting materials, crocuses, morning chorus, warm sunshine and Easter eggs in the shops – mind you, they've been in the shops for months and months already. I hope you are enjoying it! For us though, it means our **u3a** membership renewal time.

Our membership year runs up to the end of March so we'll be asking for payments from April 1st so the money drops into our next financial year's accounts. We will be sending out emails and letters later with all the required details. As we have over 1,000 members now, I'd like to mention that paying by standing order or bank transfer (using your surname and membership number in the reference field) is much easier for us to handle than cheques and cash – though we'll still accept them if you prefer.

Renewal details can also be found on our brand new website which I'm very pleased to announce launched last month. Please take a look - it's at <https://exmouthu3a.online> (and there's also a link to it from our old website). Our website manager has written an article about this on page 7, and this also has a link to our video guide to the new website. Our new website has most of the main functions of the old website but has lots more besides, with more to come in the future. I would like to express my thanks to the dedicated volunteers on the project team who have been working long and hard over the past few weeks to get this up and running. Any feedback from members would be gratefully appreciated - just go to the 'Contact Us' section and click the 'Website' link.

For those of you into sports & activities, I've previously highlighted the 10% discount available to **u3a** members for the LED Leisure Centre 'All-in' membership (and the similar discount offer for the Cranford Sports & Fitness Club membership) but did you know there's a double bonus? Those who sign up as LED Leisure members get discounts in other LED run locations such as The Pavilion and The Ocean – 10% off food and drink and 20% off bowling at The Ocean plus more – please see the LED Leisure website for the details.

Following our recent visits to The Ocean, our regular Monthly Meeting is back in The Pavilion on March 14th at 10am for a 10.30am start with the featured talk being 'Grace Darling & Rescue at Sea'.

We've had very favourable feedback after using The Ocean for the last 2 meetings with many of you asking if we can continue meeting there (though we know we need to do better with the sound system). We will be looking into the costs and feasibility of switching our future bookings and will let you know more once we have done our homework.

Any questions or ideas - please contact me at chairman@exmouthu3a.org.uk

Regards

Mike Turff, Chair

Next two monthly meetings

You are most welcome to join us for our monthly meetings at **10:00, usually for a 10:30 start to 11:45**. These meetings will be held at the Pavilion. Where possible we will live stream our monthly meetings on the link which is in the members' edition of this newsletter:

Date	Presenter	Title	Description
Thurs. 14 March '24	James Taylor	Grace Darling and Rescue at Sea	Darling's daring rescue of steamship passengers off the Northumberland coast in 1838 brought her international fame. Discover more about her bravery and short life (she died aged 26)
Thurs. 18 April '24	Gavin Haig FRCS	Trials and Tribulations of a Surgeon	What a surgeon goes through – planning and preparation

Previous Speaker reviews

A Day in the Life of a Magistrate

Exmouth & District u3a welcomed Peter Scott JP at our January Monthly Meeting. We were taken through the requirements needed to be a JP and what the position entails.



Collage by Christine Chittock

Peter showed the due processes of the law and how decisions regarding sentences are made. It was a most interesting talk and I feel I should remind readers that if you are caught, KitKat in hand, plead guilty without further ado!

A recording of this talk is now on our YouTube Channel at https://youtu.be/vGDpry_ZgYw

Jane Stephen – Speakers' Coordinator

Social Committee

Report

We have just completed our first trip this year the Guided Birdwatching Cruise. At the start of the day it was raining but after the first half hour the weather was kind and we all enjoyed our trip and saw many different birds and the ornithologist was very knowledgeable. I always am so grateful that we live in such a beautiful area.

Forthcoming events

- Our next trip to Castle Drogo is now fully booked.
- Bristol Harbourside
- Lyme Regis Fossil Hunting

Bristol Harbourside - 24th April 2024

We have hired a coach to take us to Bristol Harbourside. It's a very interesting place to visit with lots of history. You will be dropped off near SS Great Britain which will leave you free to discover this area and the Bristol Harbourside. For those wishing to visit SS Great Britain, entrance is £22 per person and this entrance fee is not included in our ticket price. Within the locality you can visit the M Shed, which is a local history museum and entrance is free of charge, walk around the harbour side, take a ferry across the river which then gives you access to the Cathedral, Aquarium, Science Museum and many historic buildings. There is an abundance of eating places, all within walking distance. You are free to make your own discoveries. We will supply a map for this event to help you plan your day. The coach will pick you up at 9.30 am from the Exmouth Coach Park which is behind Exmouth train station, and we aim to return to the coach park, by 6 pm.

Health and safety considerations. The harbourside is mostly on a flat walking surface, but as it's an historic dock site, there are cobblestones, railway tracks and many obstacles.

Lyme Regis and Fossil Hunting including entry to the Museum - 23rd May

Trip to Lyme Regis and an opportunity to go on a fossil hunting expedition 23rd May 2024.

We have planned a day out to Lyme Regis museum. The coach will drop us off at the Lyme Regis museum in the morning. From there you are free to explore local history and of course the fossils. Here, Lyme's local history is well represented by its fantastic collections of fossils, maritime and domestic objects. While fossils play a big part in Lyme's history, it is also the birthplace for many literary and artistic people. In the afternoon we have organised a fossil hunt with a local expert and you can learn a little more about Mary Anning and her amazing discoveries and hopefully unearth your own fossils. This fossil exploration hunt is a three hours long expedition and included in the ticket price. This afternoon activity can only accommodate 30 people. For those not joining the fossil hunt in the afternoon, Lyme Regis is an interesting town to explore. The coach will pick us up at the Exmouth coach park, behind Exmouth Train station, at 9.30 am and return us there for 6pm.

Health and safety considerations. The fossil hunt is located on a beach. It will take place regardless of the weather. The ground can be uneven and slippery. Lyme Regis is a Hilly small town.

Social Committee Excursions

Before arranging any event, the social committee research facts relating to health and safety in order to fully support our members. Any particular issues relating to health and safety are listed on our webpage as well as included on your ticket. However, it cannot be too strongly stated that members must take into account their own capabilities before joining groups and excursions. In addition, members must ensure they wear suitable apparel and walking aids to meet all weathers and ground conditions.

Groups News

New Group - Jam Band

The aim of this new group is to give players at all levels the opportunity to perform songs with, and for, each other. 'Songs' refers to instrumentals as well as those with vocals.

Group members can nominate songs in any style they'd like to play in advance. Then we'll try to fill sufficient roles to play those songs for the group. Alternatively, group members might choose to team up in advance to play songs for the group. The line-ups might vary from a solo performer, duo, trio, and up to full bands with vocals, drums, bass guitar, keyboards and brass etc.

There is the opportunity for members to choose a role that might vary from vocals, a simple 'play along' role, a rhythm backing role and up to taking a leading role with solos and improvising. This is to allow players with a wide range of abilities to participate.

The Jam Band can also function as a way of bringing together musicians with similar interests who wish to play together. The aim is to have fun performing music together, and to share knowledge in a constructive supportive environment. Sometimes great music will be created, and sometimes things will go wrong, which will all add to the fun.

Other Groups News

The latest version of the Exmouth & District u3a Group List was distributed to all u3a members on 1st March.

There are 100 groups listed showing groups with vacancies and groups full.

Members interested in a particular group should check with the group organiser as to availability. Where groups are full, there may well be a waiting list in operation.

Please note. Should a u3a member wish to visit a group activity to see first-hand what the group is about, the member should first contact the group organiser to check if that is possible, and if it is, to arrange a mutually convenient time to arrive. Simply arriving at a group activity unexpectedly and unannounced is not good practice or acceptable.

There will be a further issue of the Group News Bulletin (No 4) in mid-March. This will contain details of new groups operating and/or under formation, also appeals for new group ideas from the u3a membership.

John Smith
Groups Coordinator

Group Reports

Bird Group 1 Visit to Lower Otter Restoration Project

Here is a report of our trip on Monday, 8th January 2024.

13 of us including 2 visitors braved the freezing wind and completed our circuit of the Lower Otter Restoration Project. The light was very good. We were rewarded with sightings of 30 species but the stars were undoubtedly the 3 Avocets. It is very pleasing to see these birds have arrived on the site as they are choosy about their environment and would not be there if the conditions were unsuitable. Thanks to John for the photos.

Vicky Swain (leader)



Birds 1 Visit to Stover Country Park

9 members of Birds Group 1 visited Stover Country Park on 5th February 2024.

It was a fairly quiet day except for the diggers in the car park which may be why not so many birds were seen. However, there were some good views of several species and photographs of some are attached. Thanks to John Swain for these.

Vicky Swain, Group Organiser



Male Tufted Duck



Mandarin Duck Pair



Nuthatch - nest prospecting??



Nuthatch checking out a nesting box (used by Nuthatches in previous years)



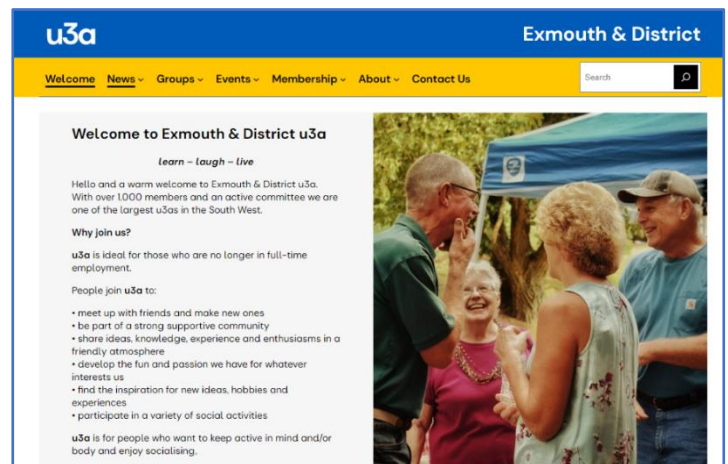
Great Crested Grebe

Our new Exmouth & District u3a website

We have some exciting news! We now have a new website. And it works well on all devices – computers, laptops, tablets and smartphones. There are currently two ways to see it:

1. If you go to our old website, you will see a message at the top saying that this website will now longer be updated and inviting you to go to our new website by clicking or tapping on this link immediately below that message – [New Exmouth & District u3a website](#). That will take you straight through.
2. Better still, you can visit our new website direct by clicking or tapping on the new website address link here (or typing this into your browser): <https://exmouthu3a.online>. If you have saved the website address for our old website (in your Bookmarks, Favourites, or as a shortcut on your home screen on your computer/tablet/mobile phone), you may wish to replace this with this new website address, and you may want to save this even if you have not done this before. How to save this new website address depends on your device and your browser. If you've no idea what I am talking about, try a Google search about this – or better still ask a teenager to show you!

The background to this as most members will be aware is that our current website, like those of the majority of u3as, is hosted by the u3a nationally, and this hosting arrangement with the current website platform comes to an end this year. We were also aware that the old website was unreliable and the website itself was old and looked dated. So last year we formed a small u3a Website Project Group of volunteer u3a members which included Graham Wood (who is also the Group Organiser of our u3a Website Developers Group) and Nigel Day (who is also Membership Secretary), with additional support from Ian McLaughlin.



Having evaluated the options open to us, we felt that the best way forward was to create our own website, thereby giving us complete control, but at the same time draw from the work that has been done nationally in creating a new u3a website template using a highly respected website platform called WordPress. So that is what we have done, with Graham and Nigel using their extensive knowledge, expertise, experience and creative genius, and you can see the results for yourselves. A huge thank you to Graham and Nigel for the enormous amount of hard work they have put into this project over the past few months.

I am continuing as the Website Manager for both the old website (although its content will no longer be updated) and the new website. And I'm delighted to say that John Parker has kindly volunteered to join me as Deputy Website Manager for the new website.

To help guide you round the new website I have created a video giving you a short tour of the website which should help familiarise you on how to find your way round and show you what's different and what's new. I have put this on our YouTube channel, and to see this just click or tap on this direct link to it: <https://youtu.be/CZzGKB9nHms>

We would love to know what you think about the new website and welcome any comments, suggestions and contributions (especially photos). Meanwhile – happy browsing!

John Hunt, Website Manager

Exmouth & District u3a online – our digital world

Our u3a continues to lead the way in offering other online digital resources for the benefit of members. We have such a lot to offer to all our members, so why not find time to take a look?

- Our new website – <https://exmouthu3a.online> (see the article above)
- Our u3a YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@exmouthu3a> (where we have dozens of our videos which you can watch at any time – and the latest is our video tour of our new website – <https://youtu.be/CZzGKB9nHms>)
- Our u3a Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/exmouthu3a> (where there are lots of interesting things, with something new posted every day)
- Our u3a Connect & Learn website: <https://sites.google.com/view/connectandlearn> (which has a host of interesting topics to learn about on your own or with others. The latest topic on the home page is on 'Live Well Longer')



Weekly Zoom Coffee & Chat



All members of Exmouth & District u3a are VERY welcome to join us on Thursday mornings for our Zoom Coffee & Chat (C&C) sessions. They are very friendly, informal sessions held every Thursday morning, starting at 10:15 for 10:30 and lasting about an hour.

We talk about anything and everything. You don't have to attend each C&C or stay for the whole session. It's a good opportunity to introduce a 'newsy' item, make friends, share a few photos, tell short stories, share art and craft work or just enjoy a Thursday morning by listening and chatting. Some of our members have told us it is a unique opportunity for those who are pretty much housebound. From time-to-time we

experiment with live 'outside broadcasts' just for interest and for fun! Examples: sharing train journeys, walks, holidays and, once, a holiday walkabout in a medieval town in France.

So why not make yourself a cup of coffee or tea and join us? **The Zoom login details always remain the same.** A reminder email of these is normally sent to members who are on our email circulation list the day before. A follow up Summary email is sent afterwards. If you want to join or receive a reminder, contact Ian or Bryan at

If possible, we aim to stream talks from our monthly meeting in Exmouth Pavilion at the same time as our regular C&C sessions. If in doubt, just give *your* Coffee and Chat Group a try. We think you'll like it.

Ian McLauchlin & Bryan Webb, Joint Group Organisers

Our next edition

We hope you have enjoyed reading this newsletter, and thank you to our contributors this month. Please keep items of interest and Group news coming in for the next edition.

Thank you very much.

Rachel Cockell, Editor