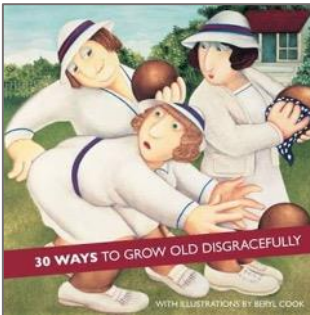


Virtual Coffee Morning: 11 am Thursday 16 September 2021

Beryl Cook – an illustrated talk by Marilyn Bishop



Beryl Cook's paintings are unmistakable and great fun. They're also a graphic social history of fashion and life from the 1970s to the 1990s.

In her presentation, Marilyn demonstrates how this artist with no formal training became the most distinctive and popular artist of her time.

The Zoom link will be sent out on Monday 13 September to members on email. If you'd like to attend but need help with Zoom, just send an email to ITChampionsMinehead@gmail.com before then.



Our Website – What's going on?

Use the News

Our u3a website News page is – rightly – a popular one, so please do visit it often. The link for direct access is <https://minehead-district-u3a.org.uk/our-u3a/news>. There you can read early news of new groups, and about talks, visits and coffee mornings. Especially as we start to move away from Covid restrictions, the News page is the best place to keep up with developments.

Your contributions are welcome

As a u3a member, you can send us your own u3a news for display on the website. Everyone is also invited to contribute to the Open Forums: you can add reviews of books you've read, for instance, or local bird sightings, health and welfare stories, or warnings of current scams.

Extra content just for members!

We now have six months' experience of the new website, so we're planning some improvements. Already over 100 members have an account to access the members-only items, which include video recordings of meetings, extra material in support of talks and presentations, and the newsletter archive. Soon we shall move to a system where all our u3a members with internet access are set up with their own account on our website. We'll contact those who haven't yet got a log-in on the site, so keep an eye on your email inbox for an announcement.

We'd love to hear from you

As always, it would be good to hear from members your own history of successes and struggles with the web! Just email itchampionsminehead@gmail.com if you have comments or questions.

Hilary Fisk

Could you help Townsend House?

Many of you who use meeting rooms at Townsend House will know that I have been the booking secretary for a long time. For the Townsend House Trust, room hire is an important part of our income. Now that I am in remission from cancer, I'd like to pass on my room-booking role to a willing volunteer before I can't do it anymore.

Of course, I haven't actually been doing the job for over a year, but we hope to open Townsend House again soon. Most of the booking tasks can be done from home, so you won't have to mix with people unnecessarily. Please ring me on 01643 704782 for more information.

Jill Merer

COFFEE MORNING DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

No coffee morning in August

16 September 2021 See page 1 for details

21 October 2021 The Great Severn Flood of 1606 – Rose Hewlett

18 November 2021 London Underground – John Polley

Zoom link sent to all members on email on the Monday preceding each meeting

Chairman's Column



As someone whose working life has been spent in education, for me, September has always been my New Year – with new courses, new students, new plans and hopes and even new resolutions. And September 2021 looks as though it really

could be the start of a new chapter for us all.

We are still unclear about how we can safely organise our large indoor coffee mornings, so, until November, Paul has booked speakers from around the country for us to enjoy over Zoom. However, we are hoping to be able to hold some smaller informal coffee mornings in late September and October.

With regard to our indoor interest-group meetings, we hope it will be possible for most of those to restart safely before long. As the rules relax, your committee will continue to offer guidance and support with risk management. Do check with group convenors or check the website for up-to-date information.

As September will represent our New Year, can I ask you to consider making a resolution to help Minehead and District u3a return to take its place as a vibrant and valued organisation within the local community?

Here are some ways in which you can help us to achieve that:

Promote our u3a and recruit new members. We know people are leaving cities to come and live in our lovely part of the country, so please look out for opportunities to invite your new neighbours to join us. As I write this column, our membership is 270; in 2019 it was 440.

Share your interests, skills and expertise by starting a new group. Even under the Covid restrictions, we have formed the prog rock and e-bike groups, both of which have attracted new members to join our u3a.

Offer to help group convenors, so that in-person meetings can resume. There will be extra work managing indoor settings, which may be too much for one person.

Join an additional group. With lower membership numbers, without your support even our established groups may struggle to remain viable.

Help us to run the organisation. We particularly need more support in publicity and marketing, and IT – and the committee would welcome any help you could offer.



Enjoy the summer break. And I hope you'll join me in looking forward to September as a positive new start for our u3a! *John Batt*

News from the Groups

Our new website contains more information and photos and is regularly updated. If you're not online, please call Hilary Fisk on 01643 705272 with any membership/general enquiries.

Allotment



We have received kind donations of more tomato plants, which are growing well. This is my favourite part of the year on the allotment: harvesting strawberries, rhubarb and gooseberries, which have all done well. This year we have seen the benefits of spending additional time working on the plot and we look forward to the blackcurrants, beetroot, onions and cabbages. We will meet regularly throughout the summer and hope to welcome additional members.

Alex Slater

Beekeeping

Karen and Janet have passed the British Beekeepers Association's Module 1 on honeybee management, so congratulations to them both! I know how much work and effort they've put into their studies over the recent months.

We met recently and they told me about the three bee colonies they have and the trials and tribulations of the winter/spring period. You may have noticed over the last few months that there don't seem to be many honeybees in the garden, although lots of bumble bees. Strange, this is the first year we've observed this. It's probably down to the fact that April was so cold and May was so wet.

I now have two colonies in the apiary and the bees are flying well, bringing in lots of pollen and just starting to bring in nectar. We meet at an apiary when both weather and timing permit. If you'd like to join us, please drop me an email.

Paul Vickery

Birdwatching

The highlight for June was a rose-coloured starling in Porlock (see Bird of the Month on the website); other highlights included Dartford Warbler, Yellowhammer, Red Kite and Little Ringed Plover. A complete list of the birds seen by members in June will appear on the website. We shall hold our July meeting with sorties to listen and look for nightjars, so I will report on all that in the next newsletter. I've already heard a nightjar on two occasions so far this season.

Next month's outing on Friday 20 August is to North Hill, starting at 10 am. It is a time of year when we have to work for our birds, as some will have migrated, and our winter visitors won't yet have arrived. North Hill gives a few different habitats, so we'll see what we can find.

Our outing after that is on Friday 17 September to Ham Wall at 10 am, possibly going on after lunch to Shapwick, depending on weather and sightings.

Kay Bullen

Book Group 2

After the lengthy break, in June we had a splendid lunch at Reeves Restaurant in Dunster (photo collage here by Rachel Irven) that gave us a chance to catch up on life in general as well as on books. Rules and guidance permitting, we look forward to resuming regular meetings (even if outdoors) on the second Wednesday each month.

We have yet to plan our programme, but expect to continue supporting the library as our main source of reading matter. The opportunity to meet again was much anticipated and so welcome when it actually happened; no more spanners in works would be appreciated!



Lesley Barclay

Classical Music 1

By the time you're reading this, our group should have held its first meeting in 18 months. To ease us in gently, we will each play a short piece of music of our own choice. We hope that this will be the start of regular meetings again.

Sandra Hanley

[Classical Music 2](#)

Our July music, presented by James, ranged from Dowland to John Adams, via Rautavaara and Arnold Bax. As we may soon be able to meet in person, we shall have a meeting on 6 September for our group as constituted before lockdown. We discussed forming Classical Music 3, to meet in James's house, mainly for those who joined this group during lockdown. If anyone else would be interested in joining us, please contact me.

Jan Lowy

[Creative Writing](#)

AT LAST we've managed to meet for real at both June and July meetings! Of course we spent much of the time catching up (and laughing), but we still managed to review our monthly writing. June's subject was 'The Matchmaker', followed appropriately in July by 'Pillow Talk'. That enabled us to take our matchmaker storyline and characters further or to start with something new.

We've returned to our five-minute exercise – without any cheating on the time, as we're doing it at our meetings. July's topic was 'Twinkle', and we will be posting some of those pieces on our website page. If you have five minutes to spare, why not give it a try yourself?

Janet Jones

[Croquet](#)

Good news!! The Carhampton Recreation Centre croquet club is up and running again, albeit having to comply with the Covid regulations and social distancing. But (there is always a but...), owing to the growing popularity of this sport we have had to close our membership list. If any u3a members would like to organise another group or put their names on a waiting list for a possible new group, please contact Helen Sellings, [Group Co-ordinator](#).

Pat Graham

[e-bikers](#)

Since this group started, we have cycled on exquisite country lanes, traversed fords, and tackled some challenging hills, while all the time being totally immersed in magnificent scenery and seeing nature at its very best. During our cycle ride last Saturday, we welcomed Alan, a guest all the way from Brent Knoll, who heard about this group from a cycle shop in Bristol. Just goes to show that good news travels far!

Corinne, who was leader for this trip, made regular stops to tell us about the history and sights of each location. Most of our trips take about two-and-a-half hours and are all detailed on the website so, if you're interested, do take a look.

Helen Sellings, for Kay Male

**There's no newsletter in August, but contributions/news welcome for the September edition!
Your items by Friday 3 September 2021, please, to newsletter@minehead-district-u3a.org.uk**

[French Conversation](#)

I am happy to report that we had a full house (metaphorically speaking!) for our June meeting. We got distracted before we even began, exploring the nuances of colouration. Who knew that there was such a wonderful word as *zébré*?

As we are inundated by statistics nowadays, we spent the next fifteen minutes listening to and then writing down large numbers. Such elementary questions as where and when to add an 's' took us all a bit by surprise. Next, we did some exercises on adjectives, proving what we already knew: that many brains working together can achieve more than we thought possible. Since we have missed so many meetings, we have decided not to take a summer break.

Di Martin

[German Study Group](#) and [Conversation Group](#)

We're pleased to say that the study group will be meeting in person for the first time on 15 July, followed by the conversation group on 29 July.

We intend to meet in August, on the second and fourth Thursdays as usual.

Rita Tremain

Literature

The group is stirring into life again! Members have received the current book, *A God in Ruins* by Kate Atkinson, which – government guidelines permitting – we shall discuss at a face-to-face meeting on 20 July.

Laura Peters

Local History

Unfortunately our meeting in July had to be cancelled and there is no meeting planned for August, so the group's next meeting will be on Thursday 2 September, once again by Zoom.

Barbara Hoffbauer will talk on the theme 'Upstairs/Downstairs', highlighting the practice among wealthy people in the 19th century of not hiring local people as their live-in servants, and giving examples from four or five mansions in the area. This will be followed by Jan Lowy discussing the issue of smuggling along Exmoor's coast in days long gone.

Catherine Knight's Watchet history walk is going ahead on the morning of Thursday 8 July.

Since our meetings are attracting well over 20 participants, it is unlikely that we will be able to remain sufficiently socially distanced in Townsend House for face-to-face encounters.

As always, I'm keen to hear from any members willing to offer a short talk at future meetings on any aspect of the history of this area.

David Temple

Luncheon Club

Depending on advice for 19 July onwards, we hope it won't be long before we restart our lunches. We shall check that our venues have arrangements in place for the group to meet up safely.

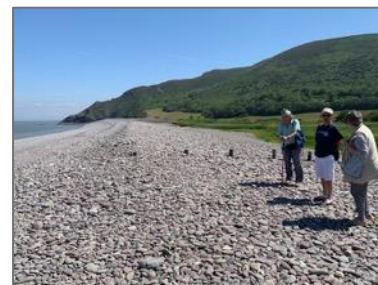
David Packer for Nora Tongs

Nature Amblers

In June, we enjoyed a very slow walk down to Bossington beach from the car park and listed some 84 different flowers, plants and animals. Cherrie Temple took the photograph (right).

Our next amble will start at Piles Mill at 10 am on Wednesday 28 July. As usual, please bring small reference books to help identification. There will be no amble in August.

Jill Pudwell



Photography

In June we held a joint outdoor meeting with the West Somerset Monochrome Group (WSMG), visiting the seafront at Minehead. The weather was bright and breezy, the sea well out and the beach quiet as ten u3a members progressed along the shore from Warren Road to the Harbour.



Patterns in the sand, mud and rock particularly feature in the selection on the u3a website, along with boats in the harbour, plus the odd (!) shot of a member or two. 'Seaweed against rocks' – Barbara Robinson's image (left) – sums it up pretty well. You can view the members' shots on our u3a website and more images on the WSMG website.

restrictions are operating at that time.

There's no meeting in August, though members are encouraged to photograph any local events they visit through the summer. We shall meet in September, but details are not finalised, and will depend on how Covid

Stewart Lane

Play Reading

The situation remains as before – uncertain. As Covid restrictions do not now end until 19 July, I have put the start date back by four weeks.

We now have five people who have expressed an interest in this group. As this isn't enough to make room hire affordable, we'll meet in someone's home, but the venue has yet to be decided. I'll also have to find a play with the right number of characters, so I'll be in touch with the Performing Arts Library.

Michael Elwick

Poetry 1

In June we held our second meeting of 2021. The theme was 'Family' and we read poetry mostly about relationships between parents and/or siblings. July's subject is 'Lists', which covers a wide range of poems from Elizabeth Barrett Browning's romantic 'How do I love thee? Let me count the ways', to the more mundane 'Cargoes' by John Masefield or 'Naming of Parts' by Henry Reed.

Thank you to Jill for the use of her garden. Subjects for future meetings will be decided in July.

Sandra Hanley

Poetry 2

Our theme for this month was 'Time/Thyme' and our time was well spent looking at an eclectic array of poems ranging from traditional to contemporary, including work by T S Eliot, Dylan Thomas, Thomas Hardy, Emily Dickinson, John Clare and Shakespeare. Our afternoon of poetry would not be complete without hearing Eileen Ann and Michael sharing their own poems. You can read, or listen to, the latest entries on our website page.

We are taking a summer break and will reconvene again in September, when we hope to be able to meet in person. We have already decided that our theme will be 'New Beginnings'.

Helen Sellings

Prog Rock

The group continues to grow. James Stringer and Mick White recently joined, swelling the Minehead and District u3a headcount to three. There must be more local people out there who are into the genre: don't be shy about giving us a go! Just email me requesting the Zoom link.

Our group members come from all over the country, with a good mix of male and female regional u3a members have joined because they don't have a local Prog Rock group. We play tracks and videos from a variety of groups such as Led Zeppelin, King Crimson, Jethro Tull and Genesis. A couple of our members have already contributed detailed information on specific groups.

Our session starts at 3 pm and lasts for about 90 minutes. Please see the u3a calendar for the next scheduled meeting. We will continue using the Zoom format.

Paul Vickery

Tap Dance

The tap dancers have now met a few times and we're getting to grips with some new steps.

We're perfecting our Charleston, trying out routines to Frank Sinatra songs and learning a speedy dance to 'Good Golly, Miss Molly'. Come and join us for some fun and exercise. It's not too strenuous and we keep it simple. Discover your inner Fred or Ginger!

Jane Lay

Ukulele 1

Ukulele 1 is still meeting, subject to the rule of six. We continue to expand our repertoire of songs and will be looking at different strumming patterns. George Harrison was a big fan of the uke, and modern stars like Billie Eilish and Taylor Swift also feature it in some songs. We have a new location – Carhampton Village Hall. There's lots of room to park and we can spread out in the spacious hall. This makes the acoustics really good too. We meet every two weeks on a Tuesday at 2 pm, so why not try a new experience – learn a musical instrument!

Our convenor, Bill Peters, is temporarily out of commission, so for the time being I have stepped in as interim convenor. We send 'Get well soon' wishes to Bill and keep strummin'.

Mike Lay

Ukulele 2

We have started meeting again – learning new songs and enjoying going over the old ones. It's great catching up with everyone and sharing what we've been practising during lockdown. If you play already, grab your uke and come and join us. We meet every Wednesday for a couple of hours of playing and singing with great gusto.

Jane Lay



June Coffee Morning Report – The Ice Man

The scene so vividly set by Andrew Thompson was a bare rocky landscape high in the Alps. In 1991 a German couple descending from 10,000 feet noticed a brown patch on the ice and found a mummified body. Aghast, they reported their find to Austrian police. And that initiated prolonged efforts to hack the preserved remains out of the ice. With the discovery of an axe, the case was filed as murder! It was only on day 6 after the discovery that the first archaeologist went to examine the body, pronouncing it to be several thousand years old.



Andrew is passionate and knowledgeable about 'Ötzi', whose story still excites archaeologists today, as increasingly sophisticated technology continues to uncover 'new' evidence. Space is limited here, but I've written a [longer report](#) of Andrew's talk that for our website. If you'd like to learn more, do take a look at <https://www.iceman.it/en/>

Margaret Shaw



Cheers! Our recently retired committee members, Jan and Alison, pictured enjoying our leaving gift of a visit to their favourite hotel



Welcome to our new members

We're happy to wish a warm (if still mostly virtual!) welcome to those who've recently joined us.

- Pat Hoyland and Peter King, both from Minehead
- Anneke & David Walmsley from Dunster