

Reports & Events from the last twelve months

Christmas Entertainment (Fri 20th Dec 2024)

The December meeting was held at Colbury Memorial Hall, when 90 members were treated to mulled wine and Christmas food. Entertainment was provided by Waterside Musical Society.

Walking & Strolling Groups – Christmas Lunch (Thu 12th Dec 2024)

A Festive Lunch was held at the Happy Cheese, Ashurst, where 34 members enjoyed good food and conversation, and also donated £54.53 for this year's nominated charity – The Hampshire & Isle of Wight Air Ambulance Service.

Discovery Group – Visit to Christmas Market at Milestones Museum (Sat 30th Nov 2024)

Okehampton Holiday (Mon 18th to Fri 22nd Nov 2024)

Walking Group – Holiday to Buckfastleigh, South Devon (Sun 6th to Fri 11th Oct 2024)



Twelve members of Totton South u3a had another enjoyable break at the Dartbridge Inn, Buckfastleigh.

Sunday 6th October

After a wet journey, we arrived at the Inn and settled into our rooms, before meeting in the bar for pre-meal drinks. After enjoying our Sunday roasts, some of the group gathered in the bar area to play various games which had been brought by members.

Monday 7th October

After enjoying hearty breakfasts, two members of the group visited Buckfastleigh and Ashburton. The rest of the group set out for the National Trust (NT) property Saltram House and its parkland. The weather was much improved, being bright and sunny. We walked through the woods to the River Plym, where the tide was coming in, and we followed the edge of the estuary to an open grassy area. Numerous birds were feeding on the mudflats and a colourful Kingfisher flew upriver. Returning to the House we made our way to the tearooms for a variety of snacks and drinks – breakfast was a long time ago! Whilst some had a look around the House, others went to the shop. We then drove to Totnes to check details for the following day's trip to Dartmouth, before returning to the Inn for our evening meal.

Tuesday 8th October

Unfortunately, the weather had changed to pouring rain for our intended boat, bus and train 'Round Robin' trip to Dartmouth from Totnes. A few members decided it was too wet and returned to the Inn to dry off and have coffee – though they went to Buckfast Abbey café for a snack later when the rain eased. However, six of us enjoyed the Round Robin experience, travelling on the bus to Paignton where we then joined a steam train passing through scenic countryside to Kingswear. We crossed the River Dart on a foot passenger ferry to the picturesque Dartmouth, with the colourful buildings overlooking the estuary. We met two other members in Dartmouth, where some members met in a coffee shop for a light lunch. Having spent a few hours in Dartmouth we then joined the 'Cardiff Castle' boat for our return journey back to Totnes, passing Agatha Christie's holiday home Greenway House and the boat house on the shoreline of the River Dart.

Wednesday 9th October

A lovely day which was sunny with beautiful blue skies. After making our way through a maze of narrow lanes, not helped by diversions, most of the group met at Warren NT car park for a 4 mile circular coastal walk along the cliffs over-looking Wembury Bay, towards Plymouth Sound. The sunny weather made it perfect – gorgeous views over the calm sea, with white surf on the rocks below and several Skylarks singing overhead. Continuing through woodland, overlooking the River Yealm estuary, we stopped in the old fishing village of Noss Mayo at the local pub! The walk continued, uphill (as always!) to the car park. Two members of the group visited Yealmpton, then enjoyed a visit to Eardington Country Park.

Thursday 10th October

Our last full day was a walk around Stover Country Park, near Newton Abbot, and once again we were lucky to have a dry, sunny day. We followed a circular route, part of which was by Stover Lake and through the woods. We stopped to look at a memorial to the Canadian Fusiliers who cut down the trees in WW1. We then continued to the now derelict Stover Canal, with interesting old features of the old locks where we enjoyed lunch before returning on paths, country lanes and forest tracks back into the park. On completion of the walk we returned to the Inn for the last dinner of the holiday.

Friday 11th October

After breakfast, we all left at various times to make our way home after a very enjoyable holiday.

Discovery Group – Trip to Bletchley Park (Thu 19th Sep 2024)

A group of 28 members of the Discovery Group went to Bletchley Park by coach. We had a lovely day, the sun shone, which was very welcome.

There is so much to see and take in, the amazing systems for decoding Enigma are mind blowing. What clever people? We owe so much to those individuals. A very rewarding and interesting day.



Bletchley Park Mansion

North Wales u3a Holiday (Mon 9th to Fri 13th Sep 2024)

On Monday 9th September 2024, at the early hour of 8am, three groups of TSu3a members were at their coach pick up points with suitcases ready to be loaded – 5 at Lyndhurst, 22 at Rushington and 19 in the centre of Totton.

Thanks to Tony the coach driver, each group was picked up on time and off we went on our way to Llandudno, North Wales! Our first tour stop was at Chester which included a 30-minute boat trip on the River Dee. We then re-boarded to make our way to the White Heather Hotel, our home for 4 nights.

The staff were out in force when we arrived, ready to offload our luggage and get it to our rooms. Having previously ordered our menu for the evening we were looking forward to our 3-course meal.

Tuesday we headed into the mountains for a ride on the famous Blaenau Ffestiniog Railway and afterwards back on the coach to make our way to Portmeirion for lunch and a browse round the Italianate Village created by Architect Clough Williams-Ellis in 1925.

The trip out on Wednesday was to the Menai Straits, Isle of Anglesey. We had a photo-stop at the longest named village in Britain and then visited Plas Newydd House & Gardens, home of the Marquess of Anglesey which sits on the shores of the Menai Strait with breath taking views of Snowdonia. We then moved on to board a motor boat for a trip on the Menai Straits, on arrival sun shining and calm waters. Within the 80 minute boat trip we experienced, rain, hail, thunder and then back to sunshine – quite an exciting and atmospheric, and at times rather damp trip!

The next day we followed the magnificent North Wales coast road between mountains and sea to reach historic Caernarfon, a UNESCO World Heritage site where the investiture of King Charles as Prince of Wales took place in 1969. The afternoon was a choice off at leisure in Llandudno but 34 had decided to go on the Snowdon Mountain railway, some even venturing right to the top of Snowdon (or Yr Wddfa as it has been re-named in the Welsh language).

There was hotel entertainment on two evenings and on one evening we organised a TSu3a quiz! On our last day we boarded the coach to 'Trevor' where we were booked for a 45 minute ride across the thrilling Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. We lunched in Llangollen and re-joined our coach to commence the journey back to Totton.

I think those who came on the trip would agree that we fulfilled the u3a buzz words of Live – Laugh – Learn on this very interesting and 'active' holiday.

Discovery Group – Visit to Eling Tide Mill (Fri 26th Jul 2024)

Walking Group – Day Trip to the Isle of Wight (Thu 4th Jul 2024)

A group of fifteen from the Walking Group met at Lymington to catch the ferry for a repeat visit to the Isle of Wight and again we were lucky with sunny weather.

Most of us walked the Old Railway track along the River Yar and stopped at the End of the Line Café in Freshwater to enjoy our drinks and snacks!

Some of the group made use of the local buses to explore the coastal areas of the Island nearby. The rest of us returned to the other side of the river, back through woodland, fields of wild flowers, butterflies and several Buzzards overhead. Returning to Yarmouth, most of us met at The Bugle Inn, where we enjoyed drinks and meals before re-joining the ferry for our homeward journey.

Everyone thanked Dave for all his hard work in planning another thoroughly enjoyable day. Well done!

Discovery Group visit to Bucklers Hard Museum and River Trip (Mon 24th Jun 2024)

First Digital Skills Course (May–Jun 2024)

The first Digital Skills course has been delivered by the Mind Solent charity over eight weeks in May/June 2024, with twelve members of Totton South u3a taking part. The course covered Internet Searching, Email, Money, Entertainment and Social Media – with plenty of time for Questions and Answers.

The course was a clear success, with a high attendance rate and a high level of engagement during the activities. At the final session, the participants gave a Thank You card and a donation to the Mind Solent charity.

A second course has been scheduled for Feb/March 2025. More information will be provided about this, nearer the time.

Bucklers Hard Museum and River Trip (Mon 24th Jun 2024)

26 members of the Discovery Group went to Bucklers Hard. It was a lovely day – the sun shone at last! Picnics were taken by some and the river cruise was enjoyed. Everyone took it at their own pace. It was nice to get positive feedback.

Award of the Charity Cheque for 2023–2024 (Fri 17th May 2024)

Following the Annual General Meeting on 17th May, 2024, Sheila (right) presented a cheque for £615 to Lesley of the "Minstead Trust" Charity.

It was also announced following the AGM that Totton South members have chosen "Hampshire and IoW Air Ambulance" as Charity of the Year for 2024–25.



2024-05-17 Cheque Presentation

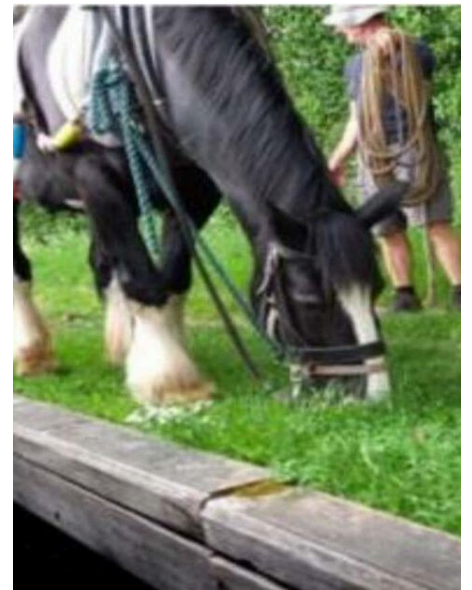
Kennett Horse Boat trip (Thu 16th May 2024)

Nineteen members of the Discovery Group had a great trip on the horse drawn barge. The feedback has been great.

We enjoyed the peaceful ride and found the working of the lock very interesting.

The crew made us very welcome and the cake and drink were very enjoyable.

I'm sure we will go again in the future.



Tattoo Studio visit (Mon 22nd Apr 2024)

Four members of the Discovery Group were able to visit a local Tattoo Studio arranged by Judy.

We were welcomed by two members of staff, one of whom was going to receive a tattoo, the other person doing the tattoo. Preparatory meetings had taken place previously during which the necessary paperwork had been completed including checking medication, general health, age, and agreeing the design. The tattoo selected had been designed by the tattoo artist.

While the tattoo was being carried out, we were given information about a wide range of interesting areas including the history and cultural aspects of tattoos, the training required, how the inks used have evolved, how the industry is regulated.

Overall this was an interesting and informative visit.

Spring Holiday to Cricket St Thomas (Mon 1st to Fri 5th Apr 2024)

A group of 41 members of our u3a travelled to Somerset on April 1st to enjoy a short break at the Warners Hotel at Cricket St Thomas. Once we had all settled in, most of us met up in the bar before finding our 4 large reserved tables at dinner. As usual, the food was good, the company excellent and those who went to the various evening entertainments found them very enjoyable.

Several people took a coach trip to Street and Wells and enjoyed a bit of retail therapy as well as a look round Wells cathedral. Others went on their own to places that were of interest to them or enjoyed the many facilities on offer at the hotel, such as walks in the extensive grounds, swimming, aquarobics, table tennis, pétanque and tea-tasting to name but a few.

This was the third Warners break organised for u3a members and seems to tick all the right boxes, providing something for everyone in a calm relaxed and friendly atmosphere.



Cricket House