



Dear member,

This September sees the 10th Anniversary of the founding of Crediton and District u3a. We are celebrating this at our September Open Meeting on Wednesday 17th September. Do come along. Our speaker will be Martin Pailthorpe, a retired TV producer, who always gives very entertaining talks. We will be having a celebration cake, and there's a free pen for everyone to mark the occasion. We are also having a stall at the Farmers' Market in Crediton Town Square on Saturday 20th between 10 and 12 am. Come and visit us and collect your free pen! Finally, we are celebrating by running a limerick competition. We would like you to write a limerick about Crediton u3a or just u3a. You will be able to send in as many entries as you like. You can send in your entries to me at liz.ouldridge@btinternet.com or hand in a handwritten version at the Open Meetings. Don't forget to include your name and contact details. The closing date is the 1st December and winners will be announced at the Christmas Dinner (more news about this next month). There will be several prizes of £15 vouchers for the Crediton Shops. Do join us in making this a memorable anniversary.

Liz Ouldridge (Chair)

Important dates

16th September Coffee morning for all at 'The Hayloft' Mole Avon Country Store from 10:30am.

17th September Open Meeting and 10th Anniversary Celebration, Martin Pailthorpe – 'Self Sufficiency and Conservation while filming Wildlife in the Celtic Fringe' Refreshments from 9:30am. The talk will start at 10:20.

20th September Publicity Event at the Farmers' Market, Crediton. 10-12am Do drop in for a chat.

15th October Open Meeting James Taylor – 'Horatio Nelson: a complex character'

21st October Coffee morning for all at 'The Hayloft' Mole Avon Country Store from 10:30am.

August's Talk: Stephen Powles – 'Otters: coming to the river near you'

Stephen practiced as a vet for many years; in later times he became a wildlife photographer and spent many happy hours filming the otters at the bottom of his garden. He had a particular favourite, nicknamed 'Hammerscar', because of the small scar on her nose.

Adult otters range from about 7 – 12 Kg although a large male can reach up to 17 Kg. The males tend to be thickset and have damaged ears from fighting with other males. Females are more elegant, with thinner heads and intact ears. They have a very thick coat with as many as 50 000 hairs / square cm (compare this to us, we have about 100 000 hairs over our entire head). They have webbed feet and powerful tails. Their whiskers are very sensitive and help in their hunting.

Otters are found all over the UK, although from the 1950s, there was a sharp decline due to the presence of pesticides in the food chain. Since the banning of DDT based chemicals, numbers have recovered well. However, there are other threats such as traffic and pet dogs.

This was a well-attended meeting and Stephen showed us many lovely video clips, which sadly I can't hope to summarise.