

SOMERTON u3a

Newsletter 66

October 2025



Chairman's message

Welcome to a new year of Somerton u3a and, especially, a very warm welcome to all of our new members! Following a wonderful Open Day in August our numbers have now gone well over the 500 mark, which is great – and a little bit daunting. What is everyone going to do? At our September Monthly Meeting I suggested that all of our new members (and established members as well) may like to go online and 'look up' the Third Age Trust. It is sometimes easy to forget, when we are in our own Groups, that we are part of an international organisation and, even within the UK, we are one of over 1000 u3a's.

At times it is worth reminding ourselves as to the principles and objectives of the Movement and to check that we are still adhering to the basic ethos. We are a member led organisation built on the principles of self-help, shared learning, and mutual aid. So, what are you, the new members and the established members, going to do in the coming year? That answer is up to you. Have a think, have a look, talk amongst yourselves – and to the Committee if you think we can help, and let's put those ideas into action. What a wonderful opportunity to do whatever you like!

Have fun.

Steve.

Monthly meetings and talks 2025

Monthly meetings are held on the fourth Friday of the month at the Edgar Community Hall, Somerton.

We are open from 9.30am for refreshments and the chance for members to meet and chat.

The refreshments will finish at 10.20 in order to clear away before the meeting.

The meeting starts at 10.30 with notices, announcements and any

other business and will be followed by our guest speaker.

The meeting closes at 12 noon.

Please join us. Visitors are always welcome at our meetings for a small charge of £2 so please come along and see who we are and what we are about. If you are visiting for the first time then please just make yourself known to one of our Committee members or 'Welcomers' who will be happy to tell you a little bit about us and help you feel at home.

Friday 24th October

"A Schoolgirl's War"

A presentation by Mary Smith

A Schoolgirl's War tells the story of school life during WW2, using a fascinating and recently discovered set of paintings. These were created by a young wartime art teacher who set out to document in paint and pencil the lives of school children and their teachers as the war unfolded, creating a unique and intriguing record. Her work features in paint the disrupted schooling, air-raids, doodlebugs, and underground lessons in shelters which were experienced by so many children.

Friday 28th November

"Berlin 1963"

An illustrated talk by

Ian Munro

This PowerPoint presentation can be best described as part recollections and a travelogue by a young 18-year-old on my weeklong visit to Berlin in 1963, plus some short details on the Cold War including escapes to the West.

Don't forget to bring your stamps and coins for the Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance to Friday meetings.

Group News

Roasties Group

visited Castlebrook Inn at Compton Dundon for our September meeting.

A small but perfectly formed group, including Membership Secretary Fran, yours truly, and 4 of 6 new Roasties who signed up on Open Day enjoyed the occasion.

John Day, Group Leader



Opera Group

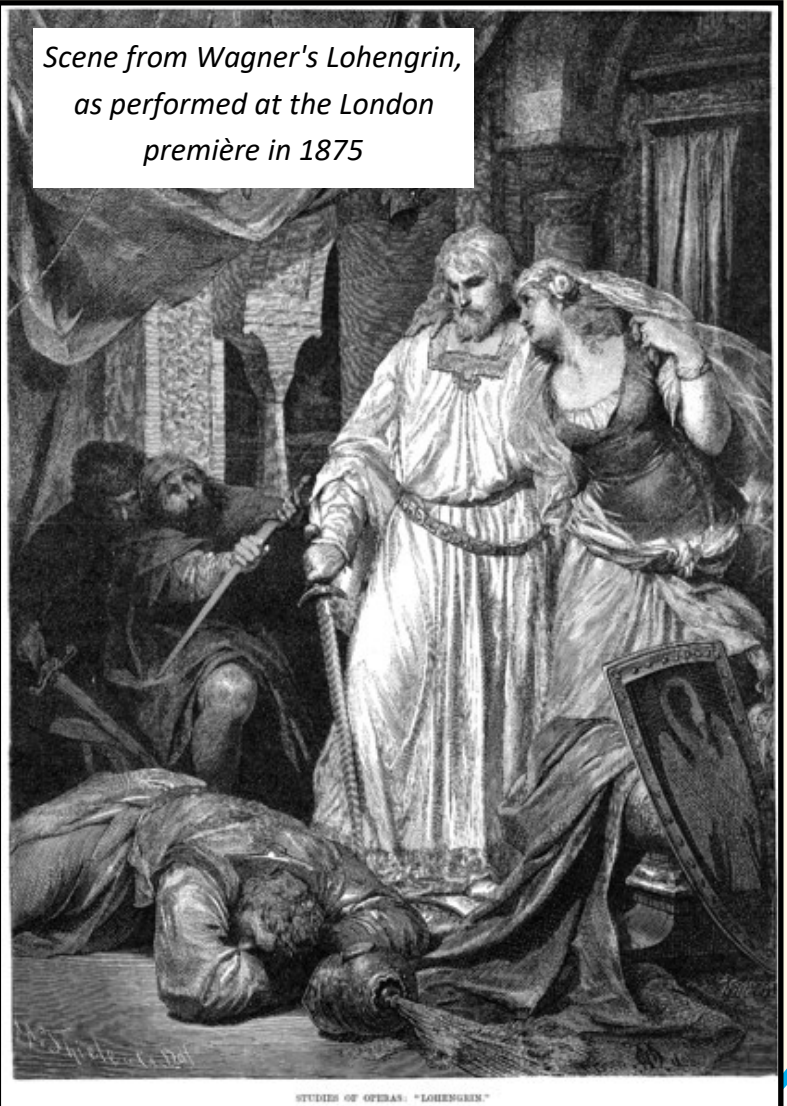
One met Monday 1st

September afternoon to take a dive into Wagner's Lohengrin. As most of Wagner's operas are long we watched acts I and III only. Act I sets the scene and act III has the well known tunes - the prelude, the Bridal March (you know the one: here comes the bride...) and the essential tenor aria In fernem land... (In far off land) where the hero finally discloses his name, what he is and where he's from. He's Lohengrin, a knight of the Holy Grail and his father is Parsifal the Grail king.

Against our expectations we all enjoyed it and next month we'll be watching Un Ballo in Maschera.

Enid Thresher

Scene from Wagner's Lohengrin, as performed at the London première in 1875



STUDIES OF OPERAS: "LOHENGRIN"

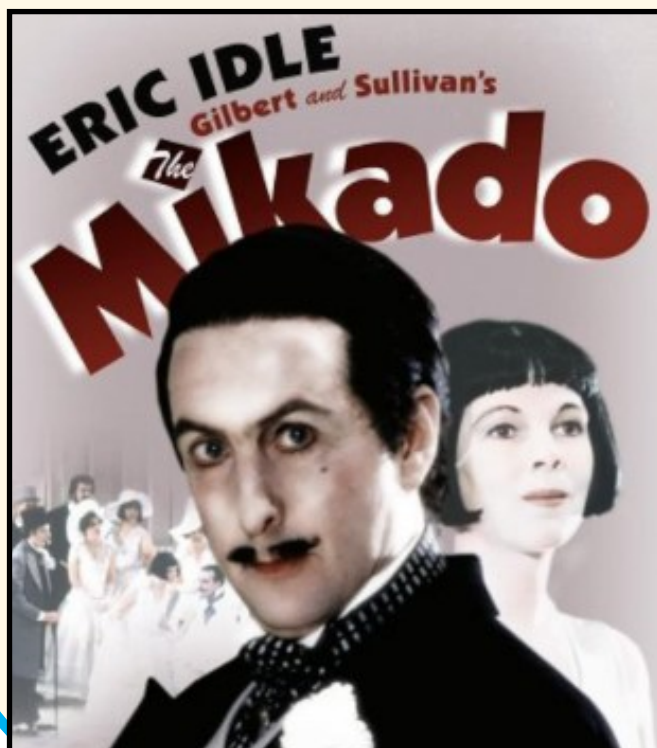
Group News

Table Tennis Group

Recently, the Table Tennis Group took delivery of a shiny, new table.

I'd like to report that it improved our game, but I can't!!

Anita Redman



Opera Group 2 on Thursday

4th September afternoon, watched the 1987 production of The Mikado by Gilbert and Sullivan.

Directed by the late Jonathan Miller it's set in the 1920s but works very well.

Eric Idle played Koko.

Next month we'll watch Aida by Verdi. Opera Group 1 will also be watching Verdi next month.

A popular composer.

Enid Thresher

Group News

Music Appreciation

Group met on the morning of Friday 5th

September to listen to a CD entitled *Dreaming, Beauty and Sensuality*. We heard music by Beethoven, Puccini, Boccherini, Gretry, Debussy, Faure, Saint-Saens, Rodrigo, Massenet, Canteloube, Ravel, Syrewicz, Albeniz, Mozart and Orff. A mixed bag of composers but all on a theme. Much enjoyed by everyone - even those who aren't avid fans of classical music.

Next month the theme will be Dance - ballroom, rock, hip hop, Morris and perhaps even a galliard or sarabande.

Enid Thresher



Amblers Group

Tony Sparks

The weather was dry as we walked from the Quarry Inn car park towards Kingweston but the field was very muddy and our boots and wellies got caked in mud!

Still, we all enjoyed ourselves but had to drive to the White Hart for drinks and doughnuts.



Group News

Art Appreciation Group

Enid Thresher

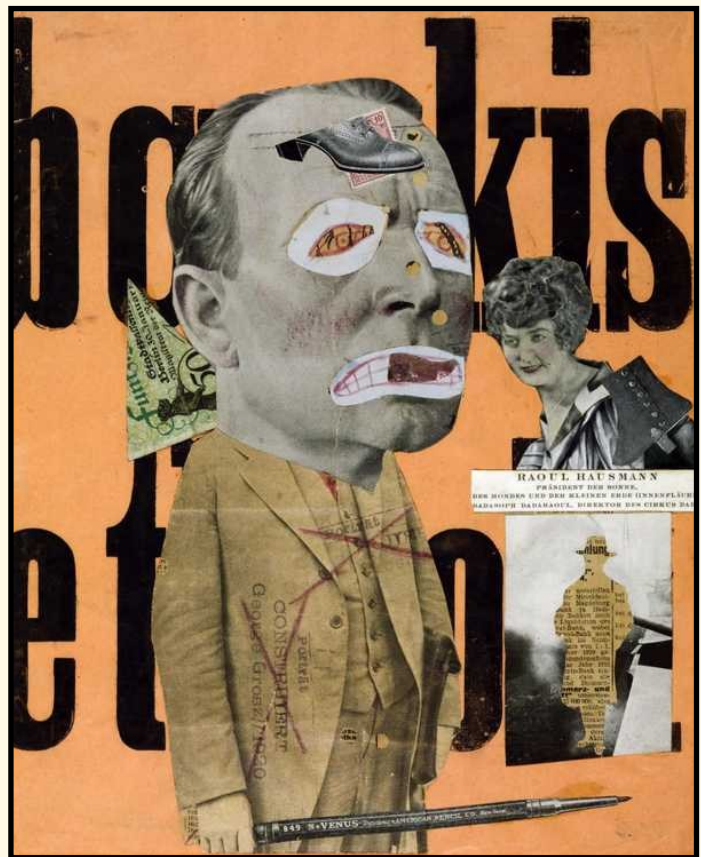
On 15th September afternoon two new members were welcomed as we dived into the subject of Dadaism, an anarchic movement which wasn't restricted to 'fine art' but spread across many subjects.

It was short lived, (1915-1922) and led eventually to surrealism. It also has a great influence on pop art and even to some modern artists like Tracey Emin and Damien Hirst. It began in Zurich where many like minded artists had fled during World War 1.

It is much too complex a subject to try to precis here.

Some of the artists mentioned were Max Ernst, siblings Marcel and Suzanne Duchamps, Francis Picabia, Tristan Tzara, Jean Arp and his wife Sophie Taeuber -Arp, Hugo Ball and Kurt Schwitters.

Next month we'll be looking at Mannerism, the bit that comes after Renaissance and before Baroque



Choral Music Appreciation Group

Enid Thresher

On Monday 22nd September the Choral Music Appreciation Group listened to a CD by the Sistine Chapel Choir recorded in the Sistine chapel in 2015. A mixture of styles and composers including Gregorian chant, de Lassus, de Victoria and Palestrina who was born 500 years ago this year.

We also heard Allegri's Miserere in the original version from the Sistine Codex of 1661 which does not have the high Cs which were added later. The last piece was Palestrina's Tu es Petrus which was sung at the inaugural mass of Pope Leo XIV earlier this year.



Group News

Walking Group Too

Tim Proctor

It was a record turnout on Wednesday 24th September for Walking Group Too's stroll around Martock (14 including Alfie). A nice mix of new members and familiar faces enjoyed perfect walking weather, some nice views and a few animal encounters. Thanks to Hilde Bucknell for the card, the cake at Yandles was indeed very good



The best part of a walk
is the cake at the end of it

Group News

History Group

The current format is that all members choose a subject together for the following meeting. Each chooses one aspect of the subject to research.

At the meeting each takes part by sharing their understanding:

Informal open discussion follows, involving everyone. Five to ten minutes each is the current suggested contribution.

New members welcome

Everyone helps with setting up, making coffee etc. We share the cost of hiring the Pinney Room for meetings.

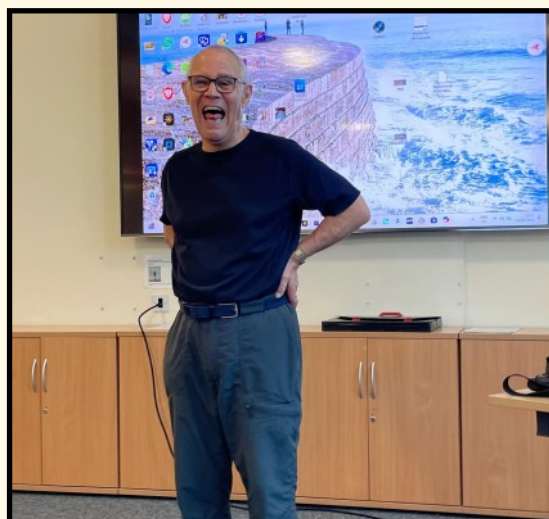
Annual cost currently £15 spread across the year.

John Emerson. Leader

The Photography Group

held its first meeting since Enrolment Day and we were pleased to be able to welcome some new members. Plans were made for future meetings, photos were shown from our previous outing and David gave a presentation on phone photography. That is when I took this - on my phone, which amused him. A great start to the new u3a year!

Steve Davis 18th September



When You Are Old

William Butler Yeats

*When you are old and
grey and full of sleep,*

*And nodding by the
fire, take down this
book,*

*And slowly read, and
dream of the soft look*

*Your eyes had once,
and of their shadows
deep;*

*How many loved your
moments of glad grace,*

*And loved your beauty
with love false or true,*

*But one man loved the
pilgrim soul in you,*

*And loved the sorrows
of your changing face;*

*And bending down
beside the glowing
bars,*

*Murmur, a little sadly,
how Love fled*

*And paced upon the
mountains overhead*

*And hid his face amid a
crowd of stars.*

Thank you Group Leaders Event

The "Thank you Group Leaders" event was held at the Parish Hall, Saturday 27th September afternoon.

A Prosecco Cream Tea was provided with accompanying savouries and cakes.

Everyone enjoyed themselves and the table quiz was gently challenging.

Sarah



Group News

Silent reading group

A first meeting of a new monthly Silent Reading Group hosted by ACEarts in Somerton was held in their gallery on Tuesday 23rd September from 11-1. The next meetings will be 28th October and 25th November.

In case you haven't heard of Silent Reading Groups before, they are exactly what their title suggests: a group of people gathered in one place to read their own choice of reading material. No assigned books, no sense of pressure to finish a set book. Started in 2012 by 2 friends, Silent Reading Groups are now held in over 60 countries.

There is time to gather for introductions and a brief chat before the silent reading and afterwards some may wish to stay and chat further. Light refreshments will be available. So why not try it?

Further info including contact details on this page of their website.

<https://www.acearts.co.uk/workshop-and-events/>

Brian Pearson

While you are on the ACEarts website, note the reading of Christmas Carol will be on 7th December.

We went to it last year and it was a delightful evening.



The Bluebell Cafe

A possible Group venue for a Christmas get-together, for your regular meetings or just for tea and cake?

A Cafe in Langport serving tasty food, expert coffee and homemade cakes at great prices.

Located at Old Kelways. Parking in main car park and follow signs to Bluebell.

They are a charity helping to support the local community.



What would you like to see in the Newsletter?

New members help?

Protection against SCAMS?

Help with disability?

Help with technology?

u3a Learning Activities?

Link to past newsletters?

List of groups?

You name it....

Send me your comments

Mike, Editor



Somerton u3a website

If you require more information concerning entries in this newsletter or other points of interest, take a look at the Somerton u3a Website address below.

<https://www.somerton.u3asite.uk/>

Please send articles for the Newsletter to the editor

mike.davis@silchester.org

Deadline for the November edition...20th October

Pictures welcome, but keep script brief

Minimum formatting please.