

SOMERTON u3a

Newsletter 67

November 2025



Chairman's message

October seemed to have been a busy month, or does it just seem that way with the shortening days and the clocks going back? It was busy within our own u3a, dealing with the magnificent response to our Open Day and being able to welcome so many new members, and busy Regionally and Nationally within the u3a movement, as well.

On 1st October I attended a S W Regional Meeting at Cullompton. Our Region is the biggest in the country and takes in u3a's from deepest Cornwall up into Gloucestershire – with Cullompton in the middle! The day was split into 2 halves, the morning session being for Network Links and the afternoon open to any interested people, but mostly Chairs or other committee members from u3a's wanting to take part, where the focus was on 'Recruiting volunteers to your committee'. Sounds familiar? Some good points were raised and, if nothing else, it highlighted the good work that volunteers do – and the need for more.

On 9th October the Committee met, and we were very pleased to welcome Peter Taylor as a co-opted member. Peter responded to an earlier plea for volunteers, and we are

very grateful to him for stepping up. Fingers crossed, we may have another new member at our next meeting so watch this space! We are constantly on the lookout for volunteers so, if you think you can help then please speak to me. Several of the committee must step down at the next AGM and this brilliant u3a, with over 550 members, cannot run without a committee so PLEASE do not leave it too late.

On 15th October I attended the Third Age Trust AGM. by Zoom. It was particularly interesting as this was the first since the reorganisation of the Trust with a Council and Trustees. It was a clear reminder to me of the wider picture and the huge scope of opportunities available to u3a members, and not just in their own areas. If you are interested in this then why not take a look? The slides, the videos and the presentations are all available through the u3a website. Log into the Members Area and find out what opportunities there are in u3a. There is a big world out there waiting to be explored!

Steve Davis

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 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.

Wednesday 17th December

Christmas Lunch

details pages 12 and 13

Group News

Opera group 1

..... met Monday 6th October to watch Un Ballo in Maschera (A Masked Ball) by Verdi.

Verdi wrote an opera loosely based on the death of Gustav III of Sweden who was actually shot at a masked ball. However, he ran foul of the censors who didn't like the idea of portraying the assassination of a head of state. Verdi changed the scene to colonial Boston and changed Gustav into Riccardo, the English governor. Doesn't affect the opera in anyway except for

a few name changes. Both are now performed regularly and we watched the Boston version performed in Parma in 2011.

This opera has some of the most beautiful music Verdi wrote and it is not heard anywhere near as often on the radio as La Traviata or Aida. Remark made at the end was that the tenor died really well. It must be difficult to die convincingly while singing!

Next month Hansel and Gretel by Englebert Humperdinck.
No, not that one!



NEW GROUP

Practical Photography

Practical Photography will be complementing the current Photography Group. The group will go out and take photographs! Meetings will be held on various days, various times and in various locations, so there will be something for everyone. We will all help each other to improve and enjoy our photography. If this sounds like a group that would interest you then please email me and I will add you to the group predman69@gmail.com

Paul Redman



Group News

Opera Group 2

...met Thursday 2nd October afternoon to watch Verdi's Aida.

There are only two members currently in this group - one is an opera fan, the other an opera 'virgin'. I'm delighted to say that the latter lady thoroughly enjoyed the music and the story. Well, we all did.

This was a production staged in Verdi's home village of Busetto near Milan, sung by students at the college for opera students there. These students, though, are in their mid 20s.

Next month The Pearl Fishers by Bizet



Enid Thresher

Roasties Group

For our September meeting Sunday Roasties group visited Lamb & Lark at Hambridge - excellent food, very busy and well looked after by staff there.

We said our goodbyes to Myra and Peter Simmonds who have moved to Taunton.

Our next outing in October is to Black Swan in Langport.



Group News

Pickleball has moved

Our usual venue is being refurbished (The Charltons Community Centre) so we have moved to the Community Hall at Hambridge, and will probably stay there. A very nice venue and we now own our own equipment! We are all improving and the paddles seem to have fewer holes in them now!

Steve Davis



Group News

Scottish Country Dancing Group

9th September

Liz's Scottish Country Dancing group at Somerton's Scout Hut.

Every second Thursday from 2-4, why not come and join us?

Group Leader: Elizabeth Beckinsale

Annabel Norwell Davis



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

Skittles Group

Skittles: 2nd Tuesday afternoon monthly at Somerton Sports & Social Club

The Tuesday Skittle Group was well attended on 14th October with plenty of competitive spirit. Harry was the Men's winner and Sally was the Ladies winner. After tea we had a game of killer to hone our skills and Dave was the last man standing.

Thank you to all the gentlemen who did the sticking up chores.

Annette Sparks.



SOMERTON SPORTS CLUB					
HOME TEAM			AWAY TEAM		
NAME	HOME TEAM	TOTAL	NAME	AWAY TEAM	TOTAL
Harry	16	9	10		
Pete	16	9	10		
Dave	13	5	21		
Annette	6	7	15		
Tony	10	6	8		
Sally	7	5	13		
Georgette	8	5	13		
Dave	7	7	14		
Sally	14	7	21		
Steve	6	6	12		
Frank	5	6	11		
Mark	8	4	12		
Mark	6	7	13		
John	7	5	12		



Group News

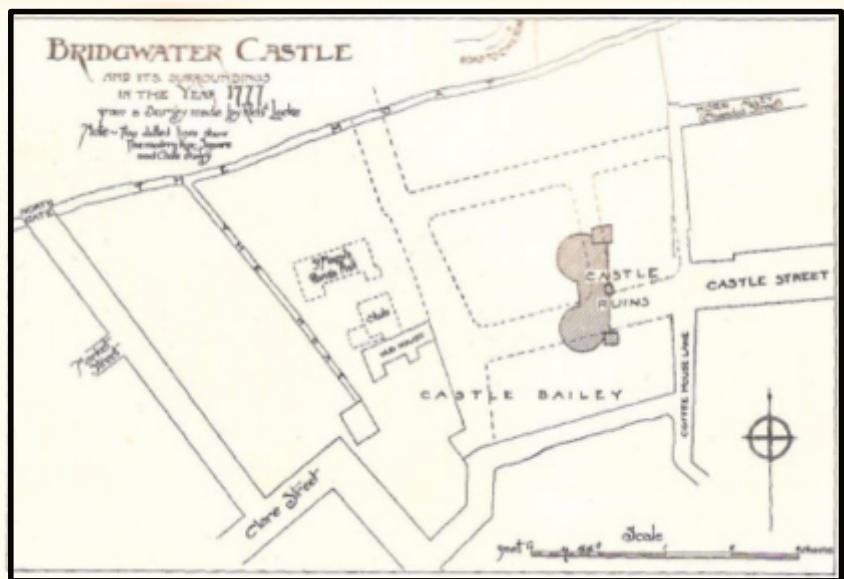
Local History Group

On Wednesday 15th October the Local History Group enjoyed learning about the Castles of Somerset.

Andrew Powell-Thomas, a local author and historian who has written books on local history, military history and children's fiction, gave an interesting, illustrated talk. He gives regular talks to organisations, clubs and schools across the county, has appeared on local radio and contributed to the Yesterday

The talk explored the history of castles in Somerset. In the aftermath of the Norman conquest in 1066, a number of castles were built across the county. Over the centuries these were modified and improved, some eventually falling into ruins and others surviving and still standing today.

Thank you to Judi and Kay for organising this.



Group News

Walking Group

This month the Walking Group met in Wells for a 4 mile loop out to Dinder and back. It was Mark and Jenny's first walk leading and it was a memorable one. With little road walking and lots of woodland, meadows and views! A great way to spend a Friday morning. The group is pictured at Dinder church.

Paul Redman



Ah, the modern days...



I just saw a grandpa help a youngster who was staring into his phone, to cross the street.

Patient: "Doctor, you have to help me, I think I can see in the future."

Doctor: "When did it start?" **Patient:** "Next Friday."

Why aren't koalas actual bears?

They don't meet the koalafications.

What do Alexander the Great and Winnie the Pooh have in common?

They have the same middle name.

A woman told her friend, "I feel like my body has gotten totally out of shape, so I got my doctor's permission to join a fitness club and start exercising."

She said, "So, I decided to take an aerobics class for seniors. I bent, twisted, gyrated, jumped up and down, and perspired for an hour. But by the time I got my leotards on, the class was already over."

I told my physical therapist I broke my arm in two places.

He told me to stop going to those places.

A retired man now volunteers to entertain patients in assisted living homes and hospitals. He visited one hospital in Brooklyn and brought along his portable keyboard.

After telling jokes and singing songs at patients' bedsides, he said farewell and, "I hope you get better." One elderly gentleman replied, "I hope you get better, too."

What do you call the wife of a hippie?

Mississippi.

Did you hear the watermelon joke?

It's pitiful.

A woman in labour suddenly shouts, "Shouldn't! Wouldn't! Couldn't! Didn't! Can't!"

The doctor said, "Don't worry, those are just contractions."

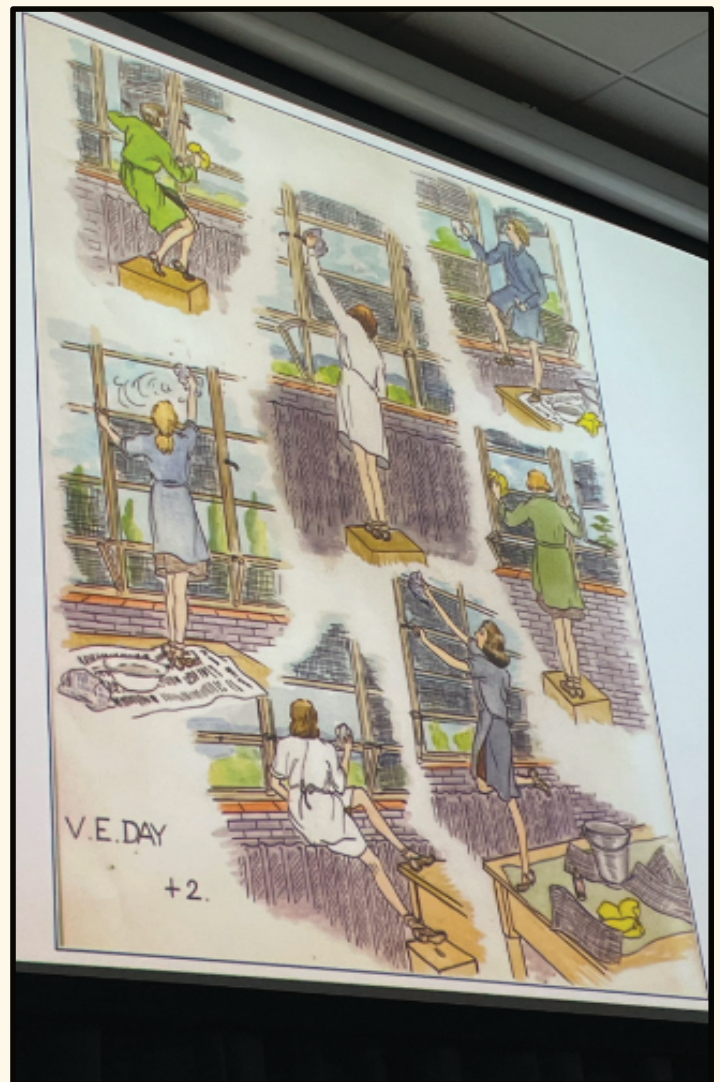
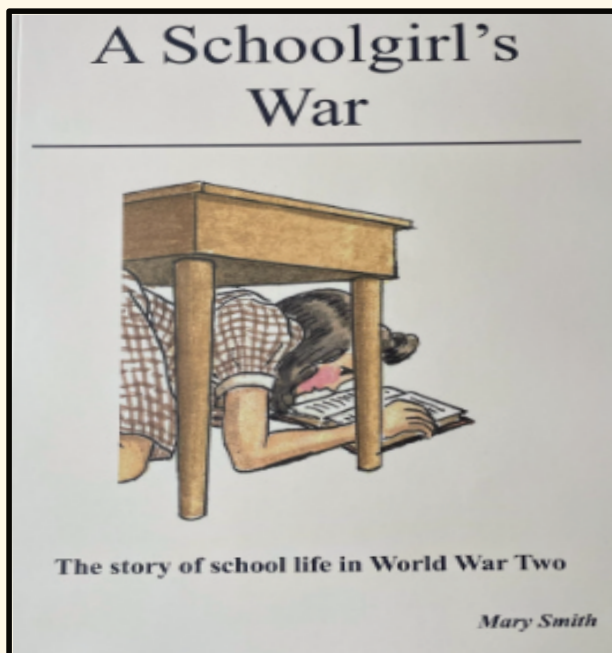
October Monthly Meeting

Our guest speaker at the meeting Friday 24th October at Edgar Hall was fantastic!

Mary Smith, upon retiring as Head Teacher at Maidstone Girls Grammar School, researched the story and lives behind a collection of paintings and sketches that had been hidden away for decades. The paintings were created by a teacher at the school during WW2, and show the everyday life being endured by the teachers and pupils during this time.

About 100 members and visitors attended

Sarah



List of Groups A

Group	Leader	Meets
Amblers	Tony Sparks	3rd Tuesday monthly
Art Appreciation	Enid Thresher	Every 3rd Monday
Art for Fun	Mabel Benn/Paula Hewitt/Linda Worth	1st Tuesday
Aviation	Peter Whyte	2nd Monday (3rd if bank hol) Feb to Nov
Badminton	Amanda Hooper	Friday p.m.
Birdwatching 1	Liz Maxwell/Kay Williamson	1st and 3rd Monday
Birdwatching 2	Liz Maxwell	Last Monday
Bridge for Learners	Gina Beauchamp	monthly
Choral Music Appreciation	Enid Thresher	4th Monday
Coach Trips Outings	Ruth Thomas	Various
Collectables	Joan Banbury	2nd Wednesday
Computing	David Slocombe	1st Tuesday except August and December
Craft	Anne Hunt	First Friday of month
Cribbage	Sally Tite	2nd Monday 10am. 4th Friday 2pm. each month
Cycling	David Robins	Times vary depending on committments
Family History	Vivien Winterburn	4th Monday
French Conversation	Ann Barrow	2nd Thursday
French Conversation 2	Jo Gay	Last Tuesday monthly
French Refreshers	Anne Green	Every Wednesday
French without Tears - year 1	John Youe	Alternate Tuesday afternoons
Garden Model Railway	David Munns	3rd Friday
Garden Visits	Jane Redgrove	Monthly on various days
Geology	Trevor Ryder	1st Thursday
German Conversation	Gina Beauchamp	Monthly. 3rd or 4th Friday
History	John Emerson/Judy Walton	1st Thursday
Jazz Appreciation	David Munns	1st Friday at 14:00
Local History	Judi Powell/Kay Williamson	1st and 3rd Wednesday
Mahjong in Curry Rivel	Myfanwy Ashton	1st and 3rd Tuesday
Mahjong in Langport	Madeleine Smith	Every Thursday
Music Appreciation	Enid Thresher	1st Friday
Opera Appreciation 1	Enid Thresher	1st Monday
Opera Appreciation 2	Enid Thresher	1st Thursday
Photography	David Slocombe	3rd Thursday except August & December
Pickleball	Sally Tite/Christopher Tite	Weekly
Pins and Needles	Sherry Briggs	1st & 3rd Weds 2pm
Playreading	Amanda Hooper	2nd Tuesday each month
Practical Photography Group	Sue Day/Paul Redman	Ad hoc

List of Groups B

Group	Leader	Meets
Quiz	Valerie Taylor	3rd Monday , each month
Reading Group - Mondays	Sally Tite	1st Monday
Reading Group - Tuesdays	Mary Beth Greenop	2nd Tuesday
Really Useful Group	Judi Powell/Kay Williamson	when ever needed
Recorders	Myfanwy Ashton	1st and 3rd Monday
Roast Potato Club	Jane Redgrove	3rd Sunday
Rummikub	Marion Mander	4th Tuesday
Scottish Dancing	Elizabeth Beckinsale	2nd & 4th Thursday afternoon
Scrabble	Jane Redgrove	2nd and 4th Monday afternoons
Short Mat Bowls	Val Fraser	Thursday, every week except August
Singing For Fun	Chris Cox	2nd Thursday
Skittles	Edwina Benning/Jane Norris/Sally Tite/Alison Walker/Vivien Winterburn	2nd Tuesday of the month - Afternoon 2-4pm
Social Bridge	Helga Hincks	Various days in member's own homes
Spanish conversation	David Robins	3rd Thursday monthly
Sunday Gourmet Girls	Joan Banbury/Vivien Winterburn	4th Sunday
Sunday Roasties	John Day	1st Sunday
Sunday Singles	Pamela Miley	2nd Sunday
Table Tennis	Ginny Facey/Angie Johnson Anita Redman	Every Wednesday except the last Wed. in month
Tap Dancing Beginners	Tamra Mumby	Monday mornings
Tap Dancing for Beginners 2		Tuesday afternoons
Tap Dancing General Class	Tamra Mumby	Tuesday Mornings
Ukulele SUBS	Sue Parry	Thursday afternoons
Walking Group	Edwina Benning/Paul - Anita Redman/Peter Taylor	2nd Friday morning
Walking Group Too	Tim Proctor/Paul Redman	4th Wednesday monthly
Whist	Fran Cook	2nd Friday 2 - 4 monthly

To contact the respective Group Leader, use the link below

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

Christmas Lunch

Hello to all members
of Somerton u3a

You are invited to our Christmas Lunch which will be held at the Long Sutton Golf Club on Wednesday 17th December at 12 for 12:30.

The cost is £30 for three courses, mince pies and coffee/tea will be included. We can accept payment by cheque or BACS. Details are on the reply slip (attached on next page).

Please reply by email to redgrove@btinternet.com or post your menu choices with a cheque to

Jane Redgrove, 62 Pearmain Road, Somerton TA11 6AY.

Unfortunately, we have not found a suitable venue big enough for all members, but the first 100 applicants will get a seat at the table.

Best wishes, *Jane*

**IMPORTANT! Please respond to
Jane Redgrove**



Lunch Reply Slip

Somerton u3a Christmas Lunch at Long Sutton Golf Club

on Wednesday 17th December 2025

12 noon for 12.30

Three Course Menu £30.00

Starters

1. Salmon and crab roulade
2. Garlic and cream herbed mushrooms
3. Minestrone soup

Mains

4. Roast turkey etc.
5. Sirloin of Beef
6. Paupiette of Sole
7. Cornish Brie and Cranberry Wellington

Desserts

8. Christmas Pudding
9. White chocolate, raspberry and lemon roulade
10. Strawberry and Passionfruit cheesecake
11. Death by Chocolate
12. Cheese and biscuits (Supplementary charge £3.50)

Name..... Membership no.

Menu choice

Starter

Main Course

Dessert

Cheese and biscuits (Supplementary charge of £3.50)

I will pay £30.00 by cheque, made payable to Somerton u3a

I will pay £30.00 by BACS Bank: **TSB** A/C Name: **Somerton u3a**

Sort Code: **30-18-16** A/C No. **00958442**



Please send articles for the Newsletter to the editor

mike.davis@silchester.org

Deadline for the December edition...20th November

Pictures welcome, but keep script brief

Minimum formatting please.

***“ Everyone in u3a should
be an involved member, not
a customer being served ”***

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/>