



Chairman's message

Welcome to Summer! I won't try to 'second guess' what the weather may be like this month, I wouldn't risk it. As I write this, (I'm already over the official deadline for submissions for this issue of the Newsletter - 20th of the month), but I'm now getting down to it in the middle of a heatwave! It's an opportunity to remind ourselves that some of our members, alongside the rest of our community, may be struggling with the conditions and that we could all be aware of this and help out where we can. I was very proud – although it had nothing to do with me - that 3 of our members were rewarded for their community spirit, willingness to get involved and for volunteering in different ways, by being invited to a Palace Garden Party! The strange thing is, they all went on different days. My admiration goes to Chris Cox, Mo Fletcher and Annette Sparks, and I thank you all for being such great examples to us all. We trust you had a wonderful time!

As I mentioned last month, we have new volunteers on our committee, and I am pleased to say that Sally Tite has stepped forward to take on the role of Vice Chairman. I am extremely grateful to Sally for this, and I know that she will be a huge support to our u3a.

I'm *always* grateful for the help shown in other ways as well. In June we joined the 'Family Fun Day' on the sports field and we are grateful to those who came to help on the day. We have two more events happening in August as well. Firstly, on Saturday 22nd we will be promoting Su3a at the Somerton Street Party which is held in the Market Square. The following Friday will be our very own Open Day, in place of the Monthly Meeting, at the Edgar Hall. This event in particular, will need support. All Group Leaders will be involved so please see what you can do, in your own Groups, to help out.

We really are a member led organisation so please volunteer to get involved, where you can.

And have fun.

Steve Davis

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Monthly meetings/talks

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

24th July

Dracula

The Man Behind the Myth

An illustrated talk by Ashley Jones.

Dracula: The Man Behind the Myth explores the remarkable true story of Prince Vlad III of Wallachia, the real historical figure who inspired Bram Stoker's legendary Count Dracula.

This engaging presentation examines Vlad's life, reputation, and brutal times, and traces how history and folklore transformed a 15th-century ruler into the iconic vampire of modern popular culture. Featuring video and sound elements, the talk separates myth from reality while revealing how the Dracula legend came to be.

Ash has spoken to our u3a on a number of occasions now - and on a wide range of subjects. He is always informative, knowledgeable and humorous and this talk is no exception.



28th August

Open and Enrolment Day

Our Annual Open Day and Enrolment Day is always a hugely popular event. A time to welcome visitors and members, alike. A chance for the Groups to showcase their various activities and a chance for you to ask yourselves - "When would I have had the time to do all these things if I was still working"?

Come and make friends, meet friends and join the fun!

25th September

Fred Finn

The World's Most Travelled Man!

Fred Finn has been recognised as the official Guinness World Record Holder of the Most Travelled Man since 1983, and his talks take you on a swashbuckling journey through the very history of commercial flight.

...more details on the Somerton u3a web site....details p12



23rd October

Neil Hanson

Inn & Out at the Top.

Neil Hanson is a successful author with 70 published books to his name.

His talk "Inn & Out at the Top" is a laugh-a-minute tour of the quirks and foibles, highs and lows of his time running Britain's highest inn back in the 1970s and 1980s, grappling with tight-fisted farmers, eccentric characters, bizarre local customs, naturist weekends, "lates and lock-ins", police raids, rats in the attic, close encounters with magistrates and planners, and the shooting of a famous double-glazing commercial

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

Group News

The day we went to Swanage...pictures

Dave Munns



Corfe Castle from the hill



Corfe Castle model as it used to be



Corfe Castle from the village



Corfe Castle model village



Corfe Castle village



Corfe Castle station - well they've had a good day!



Corfe Castle station signal box

Group News

The day we went to Swanage...more pictures

Dave Munns



Norden station



Harmen's Cross en route



Swanage
LSWR t9 4-4-0 loco built
1900



Swanage sea front near the cinema



Eddystone a
rebuilt West
Country at
Harmon's
Cross



Swanage loco depo and turntable



At Swanage
class u 2-6-0
loco built 1928

Swanage
pier



Swanage sea view



Group News

Roasties group

Our visit to Ilchester Arms hotel in June was well attended and enjoyed by all Roasties. The staff looked after us very well and our thanks to chef Brendan McBee - we will be returning.

Roasties visit in July is to White Hart in Martock.

John Day
Roasties Group Leader



Practical Photography group... May

The challenge for May was black and white photography. We met in Martock to explore the church and other buildings. For some members it was the first time taking photos in black and white. It led to a lot of experimenting. Pauline set her camera to Black and White Sepia to take a photo of the inside of Martock Church while Robert used HDR Art Embossed to great effect in the Rowan Tree image.

If you fancy joining the group please let me know. You don't have to have a camera, you can use your phone.

Paul Redman



Group News

Geology Group

As usual, I begin this report with an apology for not writing more frequently, but this time I have broken my own record for inactivity as I note I did not contribute anything at all in 2025!

Despite this 'radio silence' I can say that the Geology Group has been continually active; additionally, our membership has risen and we now have over 20 members – but there is always room for more.

Our meetings over the dark months are usually focussed on events of geological interest that have been in the news – inevitably this means a lot about earthquakes and volcanic eruptions! Over the past year we looked at a mini eruption in Yellowstone National Park (signs of a potential catastrophic 'super-eruption'?) and a larger event on Mount Etna. There were big earthquakes in Myanmar and Kamchatka to look at – the latter also with an associated tsunami. Early in 2025 you may remember the headlines created by the collapse of the Blatten glacier (Switzerland). As well as examining the reasons for this major landslide, we considered whether climate change might be increasing the frequency and likelihood of such events.

Closer to home, we have also examined the relationship between scenery, landscape and the underlying Geology in Somerset and Dorset as well as the impact of the Ice ages in the British landscape generally and particularly in the Southwest. A study of the tectonic history of the Bristol Channel was followed by a trip to Kilve (June 2025) where, as well as the Geology, we also looked at the industrial archaeology associated with one of the earliest attempts to develop an onshore oilfield in the UK (see photo). Early this year, we looked at range impact of storms on our coastline, with special reference to the destruction of the coast road at Start Bay in Devon.



Members of the Geology Group at the disused retort (a device for distilling crude oil) at Kilve, north Somerset.

It is pleasing to report that, this year two of our members have relieved me in leading a meeting by sharing their experiences in professional, practical Geology. David Harrison gave us a talk on his work in the Somerset Coalfield (yes there was a Somerset coal industry!). Peter Aslett shared his experiences as a field Geophysicist – experiences which were at the same time entertaining and quite scary. If anyone knows someone with experiences in the field of Geology who would be willing to give us a presentation, please let me know – I am always more than willing to take a day off!

The Geology Group usually meets on the first Thursday of the month either at 2 pm in the main hall in the Parish Rooms or on a visit or field trip, especially in the summer months – please contact me for more details.

Trevor Ryder

Group News

Scottish Country Dancing group *Scout Hall*

Our dancing year came to an end for the Summer break on 25th June.
This was a party afternoon ending with a delicious cream tea.

We will start back again on the 9th September.

Our classes are held on the 2nd, 4th and 5th Thursdays in the month from
2-4pm in the Scout Hall.

Thank you to all our members for your loyalty,
enthusiasm and sense of humour when we all
get muddled at times. It's great to hear
everyone laughing and enjoying themselves and
hopefully getting fit at the same time!

Have a great Summer break and I'll look forward
to seeing you all in September.

Happy Holidays!

Best wishes from

Liz Beckinsale, Group Leader



Group News

German Conversation Group

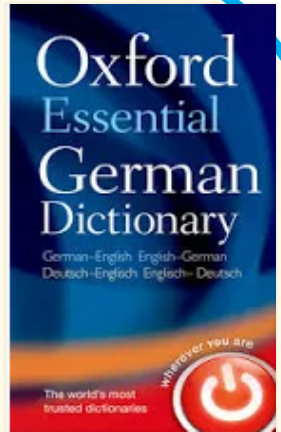
I recently had the pleasure of dropping in on our German Conversation Group. They were in the Dean Ruddle Room at Edgar Hall where they meet on the 3rd or 4th Friday afternoon of the month.

It was mesmerising listening to them chatting away in German - I felt like I was back on holiday in Germany! This Group has been going a number of years now and includes members from other u3a's as well as Somerton.

What struck me most was that it was a meeting of friends - a social get-together with a lovely atmosphere.

If you speak German (or used to!) I am sure you will be made welcome for a taster session. Group Leader Gina can be contacted via the Somerton u3a website.

Sarah



History Group *June*

We learned a great deal about the history of various primary foods: that millet is not just for budgies, that maize has special meaning in its homelands of Central America, that sweet potatoes are full of nutrition, whereas rice is not, that a 'spud' was an Irish digging fork, and why something might not 'be worth its salt'.

Next time we'll look at the persecution of religious minorities.

John Emerson



Walking Group

June

Sarah and Pete led a circular walk from the Boat and Anchor pub at Huntworth, Bridgwater. We followed the towpath along the Bridgwater and Taunton canal, on the way we past a few Pillboxes which were built in 1940 as part of the Taunton Stop Line, at Fordgate bridge we then joined Huntworth Lane for about a mile which runs parallel to the River Parrett, we then followed the footpath along the river which ends up at the railway level crossing behind the Boat and Anchor. We all enjoyed a coffee and chat at the end of the walk.

Paul Redman

Shibashi Tai Chi Group...

proved to be quite popular and has now finished for the summer. 50 members attend sessions when they are able, so sometimes we are a comfortable number and at others quite full! But in the end this seemed the fairest way to let everyone on the list have a go.

We start back again, at Long Sutton Village Hall, on 1st September.

Prue Furse-Roberts

Group News

Skittles Too

Skittles Too was played today and a wonderful time was had by all.

Bill and Denise were winners of the main game.

Chris was the Killer Winner.

Dave was winner of the 2nd Killer game.
Lemon Drizzle cake was provided by Sally, very nice it was.

Chris Tite

NAME	HOME TEAM	TOTAL	NAME
DENISE			
CHRIS		KILLER	
PILL		WINNER	
SALLY		CHRIS	
TIM			
LINDA			
ALISON			
DAVE			



Royal Garden Party

We were recently invited to a Royal Garden Party and thought you might like to share a couple of photos of the day.



Royals

Outside the palace



Group News

Pickleball group

Pickleball was played today and a surprise arrival for all was the long awaited u3a Somerton Pickleball Polo shirts.

I'm sure that they improved our games with some very skillful long rallies.

Perhaps it was because it was a very hot day and we just wanted to get the game over quickly?

Chris Tite



I told my wife she should embrace her mistakes. She gave me a hug.

Why don't eggs tell jokes? They might crack up!

What did the big flower say to the little flower? "Hi, bud!"

What did the grape say when it got stepped on? Nothing, it just let out a little wine.

I used to have a job at a calendar factory, but I got fired because I took a couple of days off.

What do you call a snowman with a six-pack? An abdominal snowman!

Why don't skeletons fight each other? They don't have the guts!

Did you hear about the restaurant on the moon? Great food, no atmosphere!

What did one wall say to the other wall? I'll meet you at the corner!

Why did the maths book look sad? Because it had too many problems!

What did one hat say to the other hat? You stay here, I'll go on ahead!

Why did the coffee file a police report? It got mugged!

I was going to tell you a joke about time travel, but you didn't like it.

Did you hear about the guy who got hit in the head with a can of soda? He was lucky it was a soft drink.

I'm writing a book about glue, but I'm stuck on the first chapter.

What did one plate whisper to the other plate? Dinner is on me.





Honey bee

Help bees

You can help bees thrive by creating year-round habitats, avoiding toxic chemicals, and providing safe havens. Support them locally by trying these simple, high-impact actions:

- **Plant for Pollinators:** Grow native, nectar-rich flowers so bees have a food source from early spring to late autumn. Use the [RHS Plants for Pollinators](#) tool to choose the best varieties for your garden or window box.
- **Let Your Lawn Grow:** Cut your grass less often. Allowing "weeds" like clover and dandelions to bloom provides essential natural food sources for foraging bees.
- **Ditch the Pesticides:** Avoid using chemical insecticides and herbicides, which can harm or kill pollinators. If you must, use non-chemical alternatives as a last resort and never spray open flowers.
- **Provide Water:** Bees get thirsty! Fill a shallow dish with water and add a few pebbles or twigs so they can land and drink safely without drowning.
- **Build a Bee Hotel:** Provide a nesting spot for solitary bees (like mason or leafcutter bees) by drilling small holes in a block of untreated wood or leaving patches of bare soil and hollow plant stems undisturbed.
- **Support Wild Bees:** While honeybees are managed by beekeepers, wild species—like bumblebees and solitary bees—need the most help.

If you find a tired bee, you can give it an emergency energy boost by mixing two tablespoons of white granulated sugar with one tablespoon of warm water, placing it on a spoon, and setting it near the bee.

***For more tips on what to plant and how to build shelters,
check out the [Friends of the Earth Bee Guide](#).***

Unique In The Month Of July

In July unique brings shower
I bloom as if jessmine flower
At noon the evening is falling
The world becomes myrtle-bower.

SRIRANJI ARATISANKAR



Keep smiling



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/>

*Many thanks you for your articles in this
Newsletter...Editor*

*Please send articles for the Newsletter to the editor, Mike Davis
pubsu3a@gmail.com*

Deadline for the July edition....20th July

Pictures welcome, but keep the script brief