



Chairman's message

Welcome everybody, to what always feels like the start of a new 'academic' year, following our very successful Open and Enrolment Day at the end of August. The event was a huge success with over 250 people attending throughout the morning, and we welcomed a lot of new members. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those involved; the Group Leaders for putting on such wonderful displays, and the RUGS (and others) who worked tirelessly throughout the morning serving refreshments – I understand over 300 hot drinks had been made! Before the event there was a lot of preparation going on and I would like to thank the Committee, and others, who helped with things like payments, printing, purchasing and planning. This didn't all come about by chance of course and I would like to give a special mention to Sarah, our Groups Coordinator, for driving the whole event so brilliantly. Well done! And on top of this was you, our members, who turned up, smiled, chatted, welcomed visitors, laughed and just showed what a great thing Su3a is to belong to.

And now we look forward to another year. It was encouraging to see new Groups popping up and we are always open to suggestions. If there is something that we don't already do then think about giving it a go. Speak to Sarah, you don't have to know about a subject yourself, you just have to be interested, and if *you're* interested then the chances are

others will be as well. The Third Age Trust has advisers, material to lend and you will be supported by us. Remember, we are a member led organisation and it is up to you to get involved.

Next year we will be celebrating our 30th Anniversary, let's make it a good one!

Have fun,
Steve



...more pictures next month...Editor



Viv, after we had sung "happy birthday" to her



What a great turnout!

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

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...p12

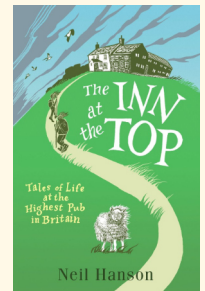
23rd October

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

Travel Group

23rd September

Coach Trip to Sidmouth

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

.....to Liverpool

Event type: Holiday
Date: 4th October 2026
Duration: 5 days
Until: 8th October 2026
Group: [Travel Group - Liverpool](#)
Cost: From £799
Booking: Note that booking is required.

Please visit the [Travel Group - Liverpool](#) webpage (under Groups) for full information.

https://somerton.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/travel-group-liverpool/

Christmas Lunch

Event type: Social
Date: 8th December 2026
Time: 12:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Booking: Note that booking is required.

Following on from the wonderful meal we had last year, the Committee have decided to go, once again, to Long Sutton Golf Club.

Full details and menu choices will be shown at a later date.

Group News

Sunday Roasties

.....paid a visit to Cross Keys at Lydford in July.

We enjoyed a selection from their menu.

Our visit on 6th August is to Castlebrook Inn at Compton Dundon.

John Day, Group Leader



Collectables Group

This photograph is of the Collectables group enjoying their annual cream tea on 8th July at Peony and Corks Café in Kelways.

Joan Banbury

What can Artificial Intelligence do for me?

Writing and Communication

- Draft emails, reply to messages, or write cover letters.
- Fix grammar, change the tone of your text, or summarise long documents.
- Translate languages or rewrite rough notes into polished text.

Planning and Organisation

- Build travel itineraries, packing lists, or daily schedules.
- Create weekly meal plans and grocery lists based on dietary needs.
- Organise complex projects or break big tasks into simple steps.

Learning and Problem Solving

- Explain difficult topics, scientific concepts, or news events in simple terms.
- Brainstorm gift ideas, business strategies, or creative project names.
- Act as a sounding board to talk through personal or professional decisions.

Editor

Art for Fun

We had a great day out at Hurds Hill House hosted by David and Clifford. Afternoon tea and exploring house and garden.

Linda Worth



Group News

The afternoon tea was delicious, with a constant supply of tea and coffee, followed by a guided tour through the house by Clifford the owner. We were all overwhelmed by the decoration of the many rooms and unusual artefacts he has amassed through his life.

Thank you to Linda, Harry, Mabel & Paula for making this possible.

Jayne Brown



Group News

Tap Dancing Group

Class of 2026

Tamra Mumby

It's been another successful year for the Tap Dancing groups.

Groups have learnt shuffle combinations, pick-ups, time steps and breaks, Suzie Q and more besides. Music is generally from the shows - 42nd Street, Mack & Mable, A Chorus Line, Chicago - together with some favourites by Fred Astaire, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Doris Day, Bing Crosby and The Andrews Sisters. Both classes are welcoming, fun and friendly and by the end of the class we all feel as if we have had a good workout. Come and join us!

**Classes begin again on Monday
14th September 2026 at the Scout HQ,
Somerton.**

There are two groups:

**Beginners / Improvers
Mondays, 10-11am**

This is a slow-paced class for complete beginners, those who haven't tapped in a long time or those wishing to dance at a steadier pace.

**General Class
Mondays, 11.10am - 12.10pm**

This class is for those who have tap danced before and are keen to improve their tap dancing skills.

This class moves at a faster pace than the Beginners/Improvers group.



Group News

The Local History Saxons Group visit to Farleigh Hungerford Castle on the 5th August

Seven chariots carrying a sortie of some eighteen marauding Saxons led by tribal leader Judi, travelled the 256 furlongs from Somerton and the surrounding area, to the 14th century Farleigh Hungerford Castle just south of Bath.

On arrival, we unfortunately found that previous marauding bands had beaten us to it, and the castle had already been left in a very bad state of repair with only the east gatehouse, part of the walls, the chapel and two of the four towers remaining.

However, Matt the current clan leader at the Castle, was kind enough to show our marauding tribe around the site, and he recounted to us its previous history.

In the 14th century the castle was built by the Hungerford family as a very luxurious fortified manor house and in the 15th century was further protected by the addition of an outer wall, gatehouse and the four towers.

The chapel is the best preserved of the surviving buildings with medieval, Tudor and 17th century monuments. There

is a family vault below containing several human shaped lead coffins.

During the Civil War the castle was occupied by the Parliamentary owner's Royalist half-brother.

The castle was sold by the Hungerfords in 1686 and partly dismantled during the 1700s.

It continued to dilapidate with stone being stolen and re-used in local buildings.

The Castle was taken into State guardianship in 1915 having been used previously as a farmyard and a popular local ruin. It is now an English Heritage tourist attraction.

Dave Munns

Lots more pictures on p 7 and 8



Group News

Farleigh Hungerford Castle

The Lady Tower

This is one of the four towers erected at the corners of the castle in the 1370s. It was divided into five floors connected by a spiral stair. The rooms it contained probably served as small bedchambers for members of the Hungerford household.

Early drawings show that a raised, conical roof, a rare feature in English castle architecture, covered the tower. There were latrines with external chutes on the first two floors. The tower stood almost complete until Bonfire Night in 1842, when children set fire to the ivy that shrouded and supported the ruin.

It is popularly supposed that Elizabeth, the third wife of Lord Walter Hungerford, was imprisoned in this tower in the 1520s. In a remarkable letter that she wrote to Sir Thomas Cromwell, minister to King Henry VIII, she complained of being imprisoned in a tower at Farleigh Hungerford Castle for several years 'without comfort of any creature.' She feared her husband had sent his chaplain to poison her but the villagers kept her fed, coming to her 'great window in the night'.



A cut-away view of the Lady Tower. (Illustrated by Philip Corke).



A photograph of the Lady Tower taken in the 19th century. (By kind permission of Devizes Museum).



Entertainment and Display

The great hall was the principal entertainment and public dining chamber of the castle. It was raised above the undercroft in which you now stand and was approached from the inner court porch up a flight of stairs. The hall was probably built in the 1370s but was known to have been reordered at least twice.

In conventional medieval fashion, a massive, open-timber roof would have covered the hall. At this end of the interior stood the 'screen's passage', an internal corridor created across the width of the room by a timber partition. This concealed both the entrance stair to the hall as well as the service doors leading to the kitchens and service areas. At the far end of the room was a raised platform or dais, where the head of the household would have sat on formal occasions. It was lit to the left by a projecting window or oriel.

Junior members of the Hungerford household would have eaten at moveable tables set along the long walls of the room. Prior to its destruction the hall is known to have been decorated with paintings.

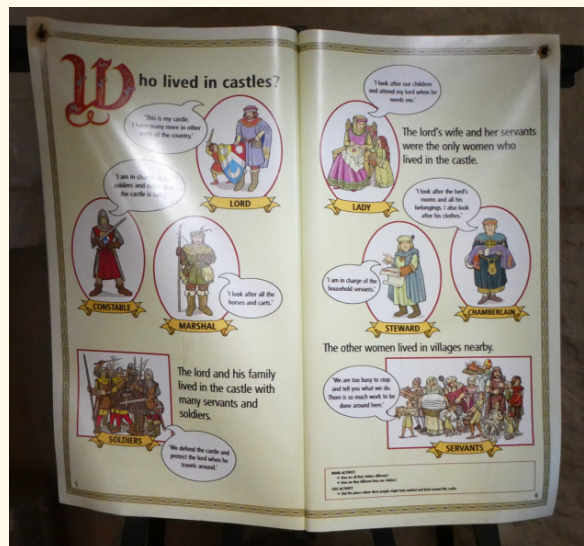
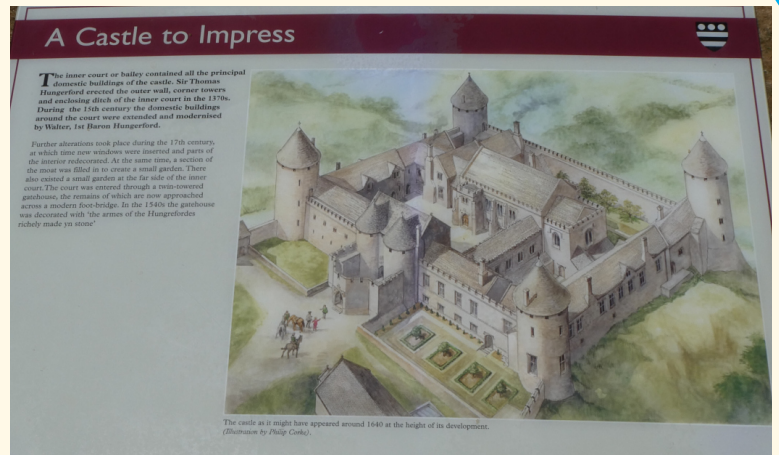


The great hall as it might have looked around 1600. (Illustration by Philip Corke).



Group News

Farleigh Hungerford Castle



Macmillan Coffee Morning Friday 23rd October

We will be holding our annual **Macmillan Coffee and Cake** morning on **Friday 23rd October** at the Edgar Hall.

As per usual, drinks will be served before the talk and there will be a wide variety of cakes available as well from 9.30am till 10.30am.

There is no charge but donations to this very worthwhile charity would be very much appreciated.



Now to make the morning a success we need you!

First of all, obviously, to come along, but also we need all you cake makers out there to provide us with your favourite tasty treats, be it, fruit cakes, sponges, traybakes or even a plate of cookies.



If it is a bit early to eat cake you may wish to take a cake home or even just a portion so we will have suitable takeaway containers available for that specific purpose.

If you would like to help by baking a cake, please let us know. There is no obligation but it is just to get an indication of numbers.

Thank you.

Kay Williamson and Judi Powell



SOMERTON U3A

Coffee & Cake Morning



DO YOUR BIT FOR BETTER CANCER CARE

Friday 23rd October

at the Edgar Hall

Coffee and cake served

9:30am–10:30am

before the talk

Your donations make a difference ♥

MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

Beware of QR code scams

when using your smartphone

QR code dangers primarily stem from their hidden destinations, which cybercriminals exploit to hide malicious links. Scanning a compromised code can trick you into visiting phishing websites to steal your data or passwords, triggering unintended payments, or downloading malware onto your smartphone..

How the Scams Work

- **Fake Overlays:** Scammers physically paste malicious QR code stickers over legitimate ones in public places like parking meters, restaurant menus, or shared rental bikes.
- **Quishing:** This is "phishing" via QR codes. Attackers send fraudulent emails or text messages containing QR codes instead of regular web links. These can bypass some email security filters because the link is embedded in an image.
- **Unintended Actions:** While a normal QR code simply opens a web page, some codes are programmed to execute commands on your phone, such as initiating a financial transfer, calling a premium-rate number, or joining a malicious Wi-Fi network.

How to Stay Safe

- **Check the URL/Link:** Whenever you scan a QR code, your camera app should display the target web address before it opens. Review this domain carefully to ensure it makes sense for the location or sender.
- **Verify the Source:** Be highly suspicious of QR codes on unsolicited mail, flyers placed on your car, or unexpected emails.
- **Manually Search:** If you are trying to pay for parking or view a menu, manually type the company's official web address into your browser instead of scanning a posted code.
- **Do Not Download Apps:** Avoid scanning QR codes that prompt you to download mobile applications; always search for apps directly through your device's official app store.

For further details on defending against these attacks, review the [National Cyber Security Centre guide on QR risks](#), or consult the [Malwarebytes breakdown on QR code safety](#).

Editor

Alpacas v Llamas

Llamas and alpacas are closely related South American members of the camel family, but they differ significantly in size, purpose, and appearance. Llamas are much larger pack animals with long faces and banana-shaped ears, whereas alpacas are smaller, gentler herd animals bred primarily for their soft, luxurious fleece

Size and Weight

- **Llamas:** Weigh up to 400 lbs (180 kg) and stand around 4 feet tall at the shoulder (over 5 to 6 feet total height).
- **Alpacas:** Weigh around 150 lbs (70 kg) and stand about 3 feet tall at the shoulder.

Face and Ears

- **Llamas:** Long, banana-shaped ears and an elongated face with little hair.
- **Alpacas:** Short, straight, or spear-shaped ears and a blunt, fluffy face with heavy fleece on the forehead.

Coat and Fibre

- **Llamas:** Coarse double coat that is difficult to spin into fine clothing.
- **Alpacas:** Fine, dense, and soft fleece prized globally for luxury textiles and hypoallergenic qualities.

Purpose and Temperament

- **Llamas:** Strong pack animals used to carry loads and guard smaller livestock; more independent and confident.
- **Alpacas:** Raised strictly for fibre (and occasionally meat); timid, gentle, and deeply dependent on their herd.



A personal story

When I was working on the Ecuadorian Air Force base in Latacunga, I was introduced rudely to a wild llama.

Whilst standing in the doorway of a storage building, talking to a colleague with my back to the outside, I was suddenly thumped in the back which threw me forward violently (but with no injury), to turn round and find a lovely face of a llama looking at me with curiosity.....a face not dissimilar to a camel (same family). I cautiously approached and found it was just very curious and really quite “tame” and enjoyed being stroked.

This meeting I enjoyed many times with less violence over the following few months whilst working there.

This all occurred under the shadow of the mighty live volcano, Cotopaxi.



Mike Davis, Editor

September, 1819

William Wordsworth,

*Departing summer hath assumed
An aspect tenderly illumed,
The gentlest look of spring;
That calls from yonder leafy shade
Unfaded, yet prepared to fade,
A timely carolling.*

*No faint and hesitating trill,
Such tribute as to winter chill
The lonely redbreast pays!
Clear, loud, and lively is the din,
From social warblers gathering in
Their harvest of sweet lays ...*

So begins this Romantic meditation on the arrival of autumn, in which Wordsworth detects an echo of spring in the mellowing nature of everything.



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 October edition....20th September

Pictures welcome, but keep the script brief