SOMERTON u3a



Newsletter 79 November 2026

Chairman's message

Looking back and looking forward

October was a busy month in our u3a. Your Membership Secretary (and her glamorous assistant!) have been busy processing new members, inviting them to a special coffee morning on the 13th, where they can meet other new members, hear about u3a and enjoy the refreshments, *and* chasing up members who *may* have forgotten to renew? The RUGs did a splendid job organising a 'Macmillan Cancer Support Coffee Morning', prior to the start of the Monthly Meeting which raised over £800! We took part in an Avalon Network meeting, hosted by Street & Glastonbury u3a, where we were able to catch up on fellow u3as news, share ideas and meet our Southwest Regional Rep. Our Treasurer, Barrie, took part in a SW Region Treasurers forum, via 'Zoom', again, with the view of learning and sharing, and Pete (the glamorous Members Secretary's Assistant), took part in a similar meeting to gain further knowledge of his role. Chris, our Speaker Secretary, has been busy getting bookings for next year, and we have finalised details for the Christmas Lunch. Sarah, our Groups Coordinator, is *always* busy, keeping all of our wonderful Group Leaders informed of what is going on with her regular emails, following our committee meetings – which took place on the 8th – and so it goes on!

So, looking forward. This month, on Remembrance Sunday, I shall once again lay a wreath at the ceremony on behalf of u3a. The New Members Coffee morning will be supported – as ever, by the RUGs. The planning for the Christmas lunch will get seriously underway (with the help of others doing lists, spreadsheets and raffle prizes!). Planning for next year's 30th Anniversary will, I hope, begin to take shape – and so it goes on!

We have a growing, flourishing, active and enthusiastic u3a – and this must go on too! We need volunteers. We need committee members and we need helpers. Please get involved, it is a wonderful opportunity to share experiences, make friends, make a difference – and have fun!

Steve

(More pictures on p…6)



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.



27th November

Alan Jenkins

"The Royal Visit that went wrong"

(and it wasn't my fault!)

As an Inspector in the Dorset Police Alan was very much at the sharp end for any HRH events in the county.

We will learn all about the preparations required for these visits, and just how many spanners a certain (and much respected) Princess Royal could throw into the proverbial works. Alan even employed a tiny toy helicopter to help us envision her ever-changing landing sites – and follow up arrangements. If it was the plot of a comedy movie, I doubt you would believe it.

Happily, and despite some last-minute and very high-speed driving between Yeovilton and Dorchester, the Police on the ground were able (just about) to be in the right place at the right time and Princess Anne was able to wave graciously.

I suspect that this hard-working Royal probably knows exactly what goes on behind the scenes to make sure visits go smoothly (or appear to). Perhaps she should have a word with one of her younger brothers!

Watching the Royals in future will probably never be the same again now that we can imagine all the frantic activity going on just out of sight.

22nd January

Mary King MBE DL

My Olympic journey

My life as an equestrian, the highs and lows, the beautiful horses I was lucky enough to ride, competing at the top level including riding at 6 consecutive Olympic Games from Barcelona 1992 to London 2012.

Mary King is well-known for her engaging public talks detailing her 46-year career, Olympic experiences, and life with horses.



The photograph shows King and 'Imperial Cavalier' competing in the 2012 Summer Olympics in London

Mary is giving her talk free of charge! A collection will be held at the end of the meeting for Mary's chosen charity the Air Ambulance.

Christmas Lunch

Event type: Social
Date: **8th December 2026**
Time: 12 noon - 4pm
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 Gourmet Girls Lunch

At long last, following your many requests for photos from different groups, I have finally remembered to have a photo taken of the group members who were present at last Sunday's lunch.

We have 10 members but only 8 were present on Sunday 27th September.

We were at The Lamb &Lark Inn at Limington as we always meet on the 4th Sunday of every month apart from December (too close to Christmas and New Year) and August (too close to Enrolment Day and usually the August Bank Holiday weekend).



The pub serves a wonderful Carvery, with a good choice of meats and a wide choice of vegetables.

Viv Winterburn

Practical Photography Group

September



The group is going from strength to strength. We have been going for twelve months and now have 35 members. Sue sets a monthly challenge, with September being "Red, White and Blue". The images attached are from new members Ewan and Jayne. One was taken with a phone, you wouldn't know which one. We have a lot of members who enjoy taking images with their phones and we are really pleased to see this part of the group expanding.

We had a coffee meet up at the White Hart to welcome our new members and for everyone to introduce themselves. This was attended by twenty one members, far more than we expected. Everyone seemed to enjoy it! What did we learn..... we have a lot of ladies called Jane/Jayne in our group.



If you would like to join us then please get in touch.

Paul Redman

Holiday in Liverpool

Early in October a group from Somerton u3a travelled to Liverpool. We had a wonderful time.

En route we visited Little Moreton Hall in Cheshire. The Hall was started in 1504 and took a hundred years to be completed. It is now regarded as the finest example of a timber-framed moated house in the country. In contrast we visited Speke Hall on our last day in Liverpool.This is another fine timbered house. This was built in 1530 but underwent several periods of development and has a priest hole, fine Jacobean plasterwork and fine, carved furniture. Speke Hall was 'sympathetically restored in Victorian times.'

On the days between we visited both Cathedrals, the Walker Art Gallery, Port Sunlight and the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Antony Gormley's work "Another Place" on Crosby Beach. It was interesting to compare this with "The Angel of the North" which we had seen on an earlier holiday to Northumbria.

No visit to Liverpool would be complete without cruising on the River Mersey or posing in front of the Beatles.

This was the last holiday that I have arranged for Somerton u3a. But do not despair. Rachel Garrett is already planning for next year and will announce details quite soon.

Jane Redgrove

(Hopefully pictures next month...?)

Everyone needs someone to talk to sometimes.

What is the SILVER LINE?

As we get older, we may find we spend more time on our own. This can sometimes feel lonely, boring or make us miss friends or family.

The SILVER LINE was founded by Dame Esther Rantzen in 2012. It merged with and became a subsidiary of Age UK to expand its reach and support networks.

Phone free on 0800 4 70 80 90

Age UK's **SILVER LINE** Helpline gives anyone aged 55 or over the opportunity to exchange a friendly word

Whether it's for a quick "good morning" or a longer chat, the **SILVER LINE** is there 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Please take a moment to search **SILVER LINE** so you can let others know there is always somebody there for them.

https://www.thesilverline.org.uk/helping-you/

In Dame Esther's own words, "I first admitted I was lonely in 2011 when I found myself living alone for the first time aged 71, and hating it.



I knew I was lucky in many ways. I was busy, I was healthy, but all the same at the end of the day I would return to my empty flat. It was dark, it was cold, and there was nobody to have a cup of tea with, or plan an evening of television together.

In August 2011, I wrote an article about my experience and received an incredible response. Many older people wrote to me and shared their own stories of living with loneliness, especially after the loss of a beloved spouse. Some wrote about going days without speaking to anyone or feeling like a burden on their family.

I knew there had to be a way to help end this stigma of loneliness. During a panel organised by Campaign to End Loneliness, I had a lightbulb moment: we needed a helpline just for older people.

After a year of research, fundraising and planning, The Silver Line launched and we received our first call in November 2013. It's been an incredible journey since, including a recent merge with Age UK, our charity partner.

We can't claim to change people's lives completely, but we do know (because our callers tell us) that making that phone call can be a crucial first step. It can lift people's spirits, make them feel valued, and reassure them that life really is worth living."

Please, spread the word. Thank you.

Sarah Terry

Group News

Ballet Appreciation Group



The inaugural meeting of the Ballet Appreciation group took place on Monday 12th October.

It is intended that members take turns to choose a ballet to watch, primarily from a list of DVDs that I have. I had chosen The Dream, choreographed by Sir Frederick Ashton and performed by the Royal Ballet at Convent Garden as it is a short ballet at 50 minutes and we could discuss the way forward for the group (I try to be a democratic leader!) It is a condensed version of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream with the music by Felix Mendelssohn. We see the human lovers, Helena, Hermia, Demetrius and Lysander and the fairies Oberon, Titania and Puck with the Rustics, and, naturally, a chorus of fairies. The picture attached is the Australian born Stephen McCrae, principal dancer of the Royal Ballet as Oberon.

Next month we'll be watching The Nutcracker

Enid Thresher

Walking Group

During October Mark and Jenny led a lovely walk around Baltonsborough.

The walk followed the village's Heritage Trail before following the River Brue and the Mill Stream back.

The walk was followed by a coffee at the Quarry Inn. Thanks to Jenny and Mark

Paul Redman



Macmillan Cancer Support
Coffee morning

A very successful Macmillan Coffee Morning was held at the monthly meeting at the Edgar Hall on Friday 23rd October. Before the talk, members were able to choose cake, play games and take part in a raffle with donations for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Although the event had been advertised in advance, it was very pleasing to see just how many turned up and donated so generously to such a worthwhile charity.
A big thank you to everyone.

There was a real buzz in the hall and everyone seemed to be really enjoying the morning,

Choosing and eating delicious cake was obviously the main attraction of the event and we indebted to all those who responded to our appeal for contributions.

Over 30 of you volunteered to bake cakes so a big thank you for your time and efforts; we really couldn't have done it without all of you.

Finally, thanks to the members of the RUGs (Really Useful Group) who helped get the hall ready, served cake, made drinks, sold raffle tickets and cleared up afterwards and made it all possible.

And "the icing on the cake", so to speak of course, was how much did we raise?

An amazing £897.11 !!!

Thank you everyone

Kay and Judy











How to keep warm...*a few ideas*

As we age, our bodies naturally undergo changes like **reduced blood circulation, thinner skin, and a slower metabolism**, which make it much harder to retain body heat. Staying warm is vital for protecting your health, preventing viruses, and easing joint pain.

Here is how to stay safely cosy and warm both at home and outdoors:

🏠 Optimising Your Home Environment

- **Target the temperature:** Set your main living areas to **21°C (70°F)** during the day and ensure your bedroom stays at a minimum of **18°C (64°F)** overnight. Keep bedroom windows closed at night.
- **Lock the heat in:** Close your curtains as soon as dusk falls to trap residual heat. Use simple draft excluders at the base of doors and windows, and keep internal doors shut to stop heat from escaping into unused rooms.
- **Bed and chair safety:** Use hot water bottles or electric blankets to warm up seating areas or your bed, but **never use both at the same time** as this creates a severe burn and electrical risk.

🧣 Layering and Clothing

- **Trap air with thin layers:** Wear **several thin layers** of clothing rather than one thick piece. Layers are highly efficient because they trap warm air between them.
- **Choose the right fabrics:** Opt for insulating materials like **wool, fleece, or thermal cotton**.
- **Protect extremities:** Cold weather triggers the body to redirect blood flow away from hands and feet to protect vital organs. Wear thick socks, slippers with good grip indoors, and a hat even while resting inside, as a significant amount of heat escapes from the head.

🏃 Movement and Nutrition

- **Keep moving hourly:** Avoid sitting completely still for more than **an hour at a time**. If mobility is limited, gentle chair-based exercises, stretching, or just wiggling your toes and moving your arms can successfully boost your circulation and raise your core temperature.
- **Eat warming foods:** Food acts as fuel to generate internal energy. Aim for **at least one hot meal a day** (like nutrient-dense soups or stews) and regular warm drinks like tea, coffee, or warm milk throughout the day.

📞 Financial Support & Extra Protection

- **Register for extra help:** If you are of pension age or have an underlying health condition, register for the free Priority Services Register (PSR) with your energy supplier. This ensures you get priority support and notice during power outages.
- **Check your benefits:** Ensure you are claiming the **Winter Fuel Payment** and any other energy grants you are entitled to, which can offset winter heating bills.
- **Get winter vaccinations:** Ensure your flu, COVID-19 booster, and shingles vaccinations are up to date via your doctor or pharmacist to help prevent winter illnesses that lower body resilience.

Do you have any other good ideas?

Somerset November

November settles softly on Somerset land,
With mist in the hollows and frost close at hand.
The hedgerows stand quiet, their berries still bright,
While shorter each morning arrives with the light.

Across the wet levels the wild geese cry,
Drawing dark lines through a pearl-coloured sky.
Old oak trees surrender their last leaves to rain,
Scattering gold on the winding lane.

The moor breathes in silence, the fields rest below,
Preparing for winter's first whisper of snow.
Smoke curls from cottages, steady and slow,
Casting warm amber through windows aglow.

Along the grey coast where the Severn tides run,
The sea mirrors shadows instead of the sun.
Yet beauty remains in the season's embrace,
In every damp meadow and weathered stone place.

And Somerset waits through the cold, quiet air,
Holding its secrets with patient care.
For deep in November, though summer has flown,
The county reveals a calm beauty its own.



<<< This is the work of Microsoft Copilot generative Artificial Intelligence assistant developed by Microsoft that serves as an AI companion for writing plus many other things.

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

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Deadline for the December edition....20th November

Pictures welcome, but keep the script brief