SOMERTON u3a



Newsletter 80 *December 2026*

Chairman's message

Well, here we are almost at the end of the year and what a successful year it has been for our u3a – and also a busy one! Your committee, the Group Leaders, and all of those members that help in so many ways out front *and* behind the scenes, have all contributed to help our u3a grow, explore new areas of learning and enjoyment, continue to make friendships, support one another – and have fun!

During the year we have held 2 'New Members' coffee mornings, the first in January and the latest in November. Both occasions were well supported, and it was encouraging to meet new members who were interested in putting themselves forward to be involved.

We have had 8 committee meetings during the year and, of course our AGM, and I would like to welcome our newer Trustees who have stepped forward, and for those taking on new roles. As well as these we took part in a SW Regional workshop in March, 3 Regional 'zoom' meetings, in February, May and October, 2 Avalon Network meetings and voted at the Third Age Trust (T.A.T.) AGM. It would seem an appropriate time now to say that we *always* need new committee members, so please think how you could help out, and get in touch.

We have also shown our presence in the community by taking part in the Somerset Day celebration in May, the Somerton Fun Day in June and our Open Day in August. These events have attracted a lot of interest, and the result is that we now have over 600 members! U3a can be a lifeline to people for many varied reasons, and it is always a puzzle to me when I hear that residents in our town and surrounding villages haven't heard of us! If you know of anyone who you think would enjoy u3a, why not invite them to get in touch? Or, better still, bring them along to one of our Monthly Meetings where they can meet us, hear what goes on, and enjoy one of the many brilliant speakers that we have?

On top of *all* of this are those members that lead, plan, organise, arrange the meetings, speakers, subjects, visits, holidays, events, walks – and everything else that this great organisation offers. Thank you, each and everyone of you, for all you do.

May I take this opportunity to wish you *all* a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Steve Davis. Chairman

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.

u3a RECORDER GROUP

CHRISTMAS CONCERT 2026

SAVE THE DATE ...

Monday 7th December

SAVE THE TIME ...

10.45 for coffee
11.15 for concert

SAVE THE VENUE ...

ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS' CHURCH

ALL WELCOME

22nd January 2027

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.

26th February

Andrew Powell-Thomas



50 Gems of Somerset

Famous for its rolling countryside, Somerset is a county full of natural beauty. From its glorious beaches and jagged coastline to its hills and vast open spaces, you could be forgiven to think of Somerset as merely a rural county. But it has so much more to offer! From the legend of King Arthur and the mystic of Glastonbury to the historic castles and abbeys that are dotted across the region; from informative museums and bustling towns to the modern day celebrations of the Bridgwater Carnival and the world-renowned Glastonbury Festival, join author and historian, Andrew Powell-Thomas, on a captivating journey to the natural and man-made gems that make Somerset special.

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



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 shown on Steve Davis email dated Sunday 15th November to all members.

Group News

u3a Jazz Appreciation Group meeting







6th November

We met at Curry Rivel on Friday 6th November where we had our largest attendance so far. with 18 members and one guest.

We played some CDs and DVDs with some ensuing discussion.

Music was by -

Anita O'Day including a 1963 concert in Sweden, the famous Newport (Rhode Island) Jazz Festival in 1958 and a 40's vocal with Gene Krupa's orchestra – plus a wonderful CD.

Chris Barber at his re-union concert in 1994 replicating his band from 1954 with the original band members including Lonnie Donegan.

Several artists with memories from the 40's including Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington, Peggy Lee, and Jack Teagarden

You will see from a couple of photographs that the excitement had well and truly worn us out.

We also discussed attendance at some future concerts.

A big thanks goes to Naomi and Maurice Powell for their hospitality.

We meet on the first Friday of every month at 2pm.

Leader David Munns

(Email: david.munns@btinternet.com)



Sunday Roasties



An excellent turnout for Sunday Roasties first visit to Fox & Hounds at Charlton Adam.

Staff and service very good but parties of 10+ are seated in skittle alley which was a bit cold!

John Day

Group News

Creative Writing Group

We are proposing to launch a Creative Writing Group on the first and third Monday mornings from 10am to noon.

At this time, although we are not looking for commitment, we do need to know how much interest there is.

The proposed format is one that has been successfully used elsewhere. As I understand it, the first Monday has a subject or theme which is discussed and "exercises" are set and worked on.

"Homework" is set which then becomes the basis of the third Monday meeting.

At both meetings there will be chatter, exchange of ideas, support regarding any Work in Progress, and, of course, refreshments. The venue will be in Somerton and have wheelchair access.
Bearing in mind that this is still theoretical, the maximum membership initially will be just 8. Otherwise, the third Monday meeting (of people reading their homework) will go on too long.

There would be no obligation to attend both meetings as experience shows that some enjoy one more than the other. So, the homework topic would be emailed to those not at the first Monday's meeting. The annual subscription (venue hire divided by the number of Group members) will remain the same regardless of how many meetings members choose to attend.

If, having read this far, you would like to learn more please contact me preferably by email on equibod@aol.com .

Sarah Terry



Walking Group *November Walk*

The last walk of 2026 was led by Sue and Ian and they even ordered the weather! We started from the Fox and Hounds at Charlton Adam and had a leisurely stroll around the paths, bridleways and lanes of the Charlton's, followed by coffee/tea and cake back at the Fox and Hounds.

It has been a difficult year for walking with rain and floods at the start of the year followed by extreme heat in the summer. Hoping we can get a full calendar of walks in 2027.

Paul Redman



Group News

Practical Photography Group

October



The Practical Photography group has been active for a year and we have grown from 12 members up to the 34 we have today.

It has been successful beyond what we imagined. Thank you to all that have joined us.

October's Monthly Challenge was "First Light". It was inspired by the "First Light Photography Morning" at Stourhead NT. Due to storm Austen the original date was cancelled and re-arranged for the following week. Unfortunately this meant some members were unable to attend. 7 of us did make the 7.30am start and enjoyed a lovely couple of hours photography despite the overcast conditions. Thanks to Jayne for the photo of Jane, Sue and Pauline and the lovely red acer.

Pauline, Sue and Paul



Walk About Group



Walk About Group's second walk was, I think, another success!

Beginning and ending at the Pitney Farm Cafe where the bara brith was voted excellent.

We walked on roads, wet leaves, mud'n'puddles.

Negotiated a slippery slope and a rickety stile. The weather was kind and we all agreed to do it again in January.

Sarah Terry





Singing For Fun Group…

…invites all Somerton u3a members to join them for our Christmas Songs and Carols celebration on Thursday 10th December from 2 to 4 in West Street Church Hall. Rudolph will definitely be attending.

Hope you can come too.

No charge but donations won't be refused!

Chris Cox

CHRISTMAS

JOKES

Why did Santa have to go to the hospital?

Because of his poor elf.



What do donkeys send out near Christmas?

Mule-tide greetings.



What did the snowman say to the aggressive carrot?



"Get out of my face."

Why are Christmas trees so bad at sewing?



They're always dropping their needles.

I got a Christmas card full of rice in the post today.

"I think it was from my Uncle Ben.



Why did the red-nosed reindeer help the old lady cross the road?



It would have been Rudolph him not to.

What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?

Frostbite.



Why did no-one bid for Rudolph and Blitzen on eBay?

Because they were two deer.



Did you hear about the man who stole an advent calendar?

He got 25 days.



The Christmas jumper my kids gave me last year kept picking up static electricity.

I took it back and exchanged it for another one – free of charge.



Su3a Holidays 2027

I have recently taken over as Group Leader for the Su3a Holiday Group, and I am currently looking at holidays for 2027.

I have selected three and will go with the holiday that is most popular.

We will be travelling in early September 2027.

The holidays on offer are:

1. Chateaux and Gardens of Normandy 5 days £1199 single supplement £199

2. Castles, Houses and Gardens of Kent 5 days £869 single supplement £99

3. Chateaux of the Loire Valley 6 days £1499 single supplement £199

If you are interested in having further detail, you can reply to me by email on rgrrtt417@btinternet.com

The details are not set in stone at this point and you are not committing yourself to anything by showing an interest.

Rachel Garrett

What to Drink to Warm Up

- **Warm Ginger or Peppermint Tea:** Herbal teas are excellent for providing immediate warmth from the inside out. Ginger, in particular, has natural properties that can help stimulate blood circulation.
- **Warm Water with Lemon and Honey:** A simple, soothing option that provides a gentle comfort without any harsh ingredients.
- **Clear Broths or Soups:** Chicken, beef, or vegetable bone broths provide excellent hydration, vital electrolytes, and a bit of energy to help your body generate heat.
- **Malted Milk or Warm Decaf Drinks:** If you prefer a traditional evening drink, warm milk or a malted beverage can be very comforting.

Drinks to Limit or Avoid

- **Alcohol:** While a "hot toddy" or a drink might make you feel flush at first, alcohol actually dilates your blood vessels, causing your body to lose core heat much faster. It also increases the risk of dehydration.



December on the Somerset Levels

December settles softly on the Levels, a silver breath across the sleeping reeds.
The fields lie still beneath a pearl-grey sky, while hidden waterways remember tides.

Bare willows sketch their patterns in the mist, their reflections trembling in the drains.
A heron lifts from frost-whitened grass and vanishes beyond the veils of rain.



The distant Tor appears, then disappears, a ghost adrift upon the winter air. Around the moors, the quiet deepens slow, as if the earth itself has paused in prayer.

By dusk, the flooded meadows catch the light, turning amber, violet, and gold. The day slips gently into longest night, and every channel mirrors stories old.

Then darkness draws its blanket over all, save stars reflected where the waters gleam. December keeps the Somerset Levels between a memory and a dream.

Anonymous

Look-out su3a...
2027 is round the corner...
lets make it a good one!

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 to 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 January edition....20th December

Pictures welcome, but keep the script brief