



MARTOCK AND DISTRICT U3A  
NEWSLETTER NO 54, JANUARY 2023

**From the Chair:**

I hope you all had a good Christmas and

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

There is much in our u3a to look forward to in the coming year. We have monthly speakers booked on a variety of subjects until December 2023. Now that pandemic restrictions have largely ended, I hope we can arrange at least one trip for the whole u3a. If anyone is interested in arranging such a trip or has a venue in mind, please let me know.

Although many members seem to attend monthly meetings only and don't attend groups, we do have more than thirty active interest groups; if you are not attending one or more of these, you are missing out on an important part of the u3a experience. Our interest groups cover academic subjects, hobbies, music and dance, art and craft, discussion groups, sport, and more, so we have a wide range to suit everyone. Joining a group is also a good way to meet new friends and forge new friendships with like minded people. Groups available are listed on our website. So why not get in touch with Mary and join a group, either to develop an existing interest or to learn a new one? If you have an interest not covered by our existing groups, why not start a new group? Again, Mary can help. In addition to our own groups, you may find a subject that interests you in one of our partner u3as in the Avalon network.

We are also working on establishing a mechanism for setting up groups which cover a wider network of u3as across Somerset. If you are interested in the possibility of setting up such a group, contact me. These groups would meet either online, in member's houses, or in a central venue if people are prepared to travel, and it is hoped they would cover more specialised subjects. My own experience in running such a group is that arranging car sharing is useful. In addition, u3a Headquarters runs many online activities and groups which are listed on their website.

In this Newsletter, we feature an article by Chris Atkins, our Vice Chair, on Abstraction in Art, based on a workshop she recently gave to the Art group. Next month our President, Sue MacLean, has volunteered to write about her French group. I hope we can feature similar articles from Group Facilitators in coming months. I realise that the motto for many U3A members seems to be similar to that in the army, i.e. “Never volunteer for anything”, but I will be phoning during the year to try to get people to write such articles about their groups, which may encourage more group membership.

Contact details for myself and other committee members are listed at the end of this Newsletter.

### **Monthly meetings:**

On 11<sup>th</sup> January our monthly meeting will feature a talk by Lisa Bartlett on Iyengar Yoga. This will be a talk about BKS Iyengar and his development of yoga props, creating a yoga practice accessible for all stages of life.

As an aside to this, the following is available from the national u3a:

### **Yoga with Nancy and Liz**



Yoga with Nancy and Liz

If you are looking for a relaxing way to start your morning, a recorded u3a session of Yoga with members Nancy and Liz has just gone live on [our YouTube channel](#) - for you to take part in whenever you may need a moment for yourself to unwind.

And if you like it - there are two more sessions coming in January 2023. Book your place on [the u3a events page](#).

On 8<sup>th</sup> February our annual Brimsmore Gold Club talk will take place on “Gardening for Wildlife”.

### **Photos of our Christmas event:**

(Taken by Chris Atkins).



### **Science Group:**

We are arranging a trip to Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. So far we have 11 people interested in going. If we could get 20 or more people interested, they could arrange a special talk. For our last arrangement, which was cancelled due to the pandemic, we had a talk arranged by a Professor from Bristol University on “The Geology of Somerset”; we could probably arrange this again. The cost is likely to be around £20 plus lunch. This is open to all members so let Greg Atkins know if you are interested.

### **Other talks:**

Members of the Avalon group of u3as also hold talks at monthly meetings, and other events, which may be of interest to our members. A list of websites of member u3as may be found here on the nascent Avalon website.

<https://u3asites.org.uk/south-west/page/28956>

### **Brimsmore Gold Club:**

20% discount vouchers for Brimsmore Garden Centres, valid for January and February, and forms for the special bulk purchase of compost are still available and can be obtained at the next monthly meeting, which is on January 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **Activation of new website:**

The target date for activation of our new website is 9<sup>th</sup> January. The URL is:

<http://www.martocku3a.org.uk/>

This has been constructed for us by Teapot Creative Ltd., as well as having considerable input and much hard work from Diana Davies and Alison, and is the outcome of an original idea by Don Reed. Please look it up and let us know what you think, as well as any suggestions for improvement or amendment.

### **South Petherton Community Shed:**

What is the South Petherton Community Shed? Meeting on Thursday afternoons from 2-4.30pm at the Chapels in South Petherton Cemetery they make things for the local community from wood offcuts and renovate old wooden items, sharing skills and having fun. If you are interested, go along to see for yourself or contact Helen Beaufoy on 01460 240943 or [helenbeaufoy@outlook.com](mailto:helenbeaufoy@outlook.com)

### **Abstraction in Art – Chris Atkins**

Most of you know me as Vice Chair of Martock u3a, but I was trained in fine art and have a small studio here in Martock. I was asked to give a workshop to the Art group that Kay Durrant facilitates, and was given free rein as to subject matter. My choice was abstraction because it is never straightforward, and my aim was to encourage members to think differently, hopefully opening up more possibilities than the usual representational one when interpreting a visual image. People often have strong preconceived ideas about the term abstraction, and it was interesting when we started the conversation that, although there was a feeling of nervousness, everyone was willing to put into practice the workshop notes.

Copy of the photograph given to each group member to kick start the abstraction process.



I had prepared A2 sheets of cartridge paper quartered by masking tape and view finders in order to isolate small areas of interest:





We discussed composition, tone and mark making and used only charcoal, conte, white chalk and or the use of a putty rubber to carve back into the image. I had divided sheets of A2 cartridge into four parts using masking tape and asked that each group member make 4 drawings using aspects of the provided. The work started to flow and by the end of the morning everyone was keen to explore this complex subject further.

Week 2. Using their drawings only plus the limited palette.



I returned to the group the following meeting to talk a little more about composition, loosely using the golden section as the method of balance with this classical mathematical formula. We looked at illustrations such as Hokusai's The Great Wave (above) and also Michelangelo's The Creation of Adam. We also talked about their limited palette and how many different tones and colours could be made. I then left them to it:



My personal aim for this group was to help shift perception and allow that to dictate how they approached this task. As you will see above the depictions are unique and from the same image appeared totally different paintings. I so enjoyed facilitating this workshop because everyone immersed themselves in what they were doing, and I feel this first experiment in abstraction was mostly a success.

### **Birthdays:**

The following had birthdays in January, according to information supplied by themselves to us. We wish everyone a very happy birthday.

Jackie Ballard, Kenneth Smith, Anne Williams, Liz Hasted, Rosalind Rich

If you have any interesting news or views, or if you would like an item published in the Newsletter, contact Greg Atkins.

**Committee members:**

Chair: Greg Atkins; chairmaru3a@gmail.com

Vice Chair: Chris Atkins; vicemaru3a1@gmail.com

Treasurer: Sue Roberts; treasmaru3@gmail.com

Secretary: Pat Brett; commaru3a@gmail.com

Membership Secretary: Susie Stakes; martocku3amembership@gmail.com

Events Secretary: Mal Nelson Hedge; martocku3aevents1@gmail.com

Groups Secretary: Mary Marshall; martocku3agroupssec1@gmail.com

Web Manager: Alison Bleasdale; webmaru3a@gmail.com

Publicity Secretary: Mona Mace; pubmaru3a@gmail.com

Honorary President: Sue MacLean