



MARTOCK AND DISTRICT U3A
NEWSLETTER NO 55, FEBRUARY 2023

From the Chair:

In this issue we feature a piece from Sue MacLean, our President, on her French Group. I hope we can feature such articles in future from many more group facilitators. In the next issue, I hope to include a piece from the Writing Group.

At the last Avalon meeting, it was reported that a PhD student had asked for volunteers among u3a members in the Southwest to take part in a study for her psychology thesis on memory loss. I don't know whether anybody in Martock took part, but she has sent a nontechnical report of the results of her study to the Southwest u3a Chairs, and I have reproduced it below. We all often report that we have become more forgetful, but her study seems to contradict this. She found that healthy older people experience memory loss at roughly the same frequency as those in younger age groups.

We would like to ask those members who currently request a paper copy of this Newsletter to be posted to them to consider receiving it by email. It does take time, effort and money to produce a hard copy, and it is not environmentally friendly. That said, it is understood that some members do need to see a document, and have paid for this. However, if you feel that you could indeed manage without a hard copy, please let our membership secretary, Susie Stakes, know (email address below).

Monthly meetings:

Our last monthly meeting featured a talk by Lisa Bartlett on Iyengar Yoga. A number of our members expressed an interest in setting up such a group in Martock. I have heard from Lisa that she does have enough members interested and she is in the process of finding a venue. This cannot be done under the auspices of the u3a though as she is charging £6.50 per session. If interested contact her at:

lisabartlett@mac.com

Our next monthly meeting on 8th February will be our annual Brimsmore Gold Club talk on "Gardening for Wildlife".. The speaker will be Mike Burks:

A look into the reasons why one may wish to garden for wildlife and how to fit wildlife gardening into a conventional garden.

Then on 8th March Linda Fisher will give a practical talk entitled "Protect the Ones you Love". She will talk about wills and Lasting Power of Attorney, and encourage us to leave our lives tidy.

Possible trip:

We hope to arrange a trip on the West Somerset Railway in the spring, at present on Monday May 29th. This is a vintage railway that runs from Bishops Lydeard near Taunton to Minehead, a distance of 22 miles. About half the trains are steam and the rest vintage diesel. All of the carriages are vintage. The trip takes about 1h 20min each way because the trains stop at every station, encompassing several picturesque villages, scenic countryside and partly along the coast. The usual cost is £30 but we can get a reduction through a group rate if at least 16 go. If less than 20 go, we will arrange car sharing, but for 20 or more it may be feasible to hire a coach. So on top of the cost of the ticket and transport, there will be the cost of lunch. This can be bought from a cafe at the station, from a buffet car on the train, or in Minehead on arrival where there are restaurants and fish and chip shops. Or you can bring your own packed lunch. We aim to spend around 2-3h in Minehead. Let Greg Atkins know if you are interested. Further details about the West Somerset Railway can be found on their website here:

<https://www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk/>

Science Group:

We are arranging a trip to Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution on March 22nd. This is open to all members, so let Greg Atkins know if you want to go.

French Groups:

We used to have three French groups, but we are now down to one, that facilitated by Sue MacLean. Sue cannot take any more members in her group due to a health issue. We therefore badly need a facilitator for an Intermediate French Group. If interested please contact Mary.

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>

New Website:

This is now up and running so have a look at it. The URL is:

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

You need to use this domain name as the old website has not yet been deleted (this has to be done by u3a Headquarters) and a search will produce this. We would be grateful if Group facilitators who have not done so already could send a short description of their group to Alison or Mary, for incorporation into the website. So far only 15 of the 35 groups have such descriptions.

TAM magazine:

Just a reminder that if you do not wish to receive this, let us know as we do not want to pay for unnecessary copies.

Audit of Finances:

The annual audit of our financial accounts has been completed by Ian Munro, of Chard and Ilminster u3a. It applies to the period 1/10/2021-30/09/2022 when Greg Atkins was Treasurer; Sue Roberts has now taken on this role. His statement is copied below:

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7th January 2023

MARTOCK U3a accounts for year ending 30th September 2022

I can confirm that I have audited the above accounts and that they all seem in order and in keeping with the activities for a small U3a branch. There were a couple of minor queries which were satisfactorily answered by the branch treasurer in post for that year. The closing bank balance at the year-end shows a healthy surplus over last year, which reflects the previous year's income being reduced due to a reduction in subscriptions due to the Covid pandemic.

Yours sincerely

Ian Munro

Ilminster Literary Festival:

Don't miss Ilminster Literary Festival 2023!
Thursday June 1 to Thursday June 8 inclusive
For Readers, Writers and Arts lovers everywhere

Full details on our website from April – ilminsterliteraryfestival.org
Or sign up now to our free electronic newsletter by emailing ilminsterlitfest@gmail.com

Concerts in David Hall, South Petherton:

MUSICIANS SOUTH WEST

TRIO PARADIS

Friendship through music

WEDNESDAY 1st FEBRUARY
Time & Motion
Music inspired by time: morning, night, yesterday, today, tomorrow..

WEDNESDAY 1st MARCH
Daughters of the Muse
Music by Rebecca Clarke, Charlotte Sohy, Lili Boulanger and others...

WEDNESDAY 5th APRIL
The Sea
Sea creatures, boats, seafarers and the sea in all its changing moods

WEDNESDAY 3rd MAY
Fantasies, Serenades & Scherzos
Romantic masterpieces inspired by love and imagination

WEDNESDAY 7th JUNE
A Night at the Opera
Operatic masterpieces from Purcell, Verdi, Puccini...

Monthly Café Concerts

First **Wednesday** of each month at **11am**

THE DAVID HALL SOUTH PETHERTON

Pop-up café from 10.30am. Free entry with retiring collection. Concerts last c45 minutes
Visit www.trioparadis.com for more information, including all current concerts and venues

Painting holidays in Crete:

The following message was sent via the Martock & District U3A Web Site. It was addressed to: Membership.

Please reply to Active Crete <info@activecrete.gr>.

For the information of your painting/art groups

Invitation to a painting holiday week in Crete

Dear Fellow Artists,

ACTIVE CRETE would like to invite your group to visit us in Western Crete for a Painting week. Other Painting groups have been delighted with their Active Crete Holidays and they are coming back again and again.

The holiday is suitable for both beginners and advanced artists. We paint outdoors in a different place every day. Basic painting materials are available and they are included in the holiday price but of course you can bring your own if you want to. Ours include acrylic paint and wetbox, paper, brushes, boards and lightweight stools. We also have some chalks and pastels, pencils and rubbers. The leader of the painting workshops is the experienced artist Camille Marquand (<https://camillemarquand.com/>).

From the Parish Council:

Route 6T6 Free Event

**A presentation and open
information event to
help you drive safer for
longer**



Friday 24th February 2023



roadsafety@somerset.gov.uk

**10am to 1pm Martock Parish Hall
TA12 6JL**



01823 423430

Refreshments available



@SCC_Roadsafety

Have a go on our driving simulator to test your reaction time and hazard perception.



@Somersetroadsafety

Talk with various support agencies to see what they can offer.

Improving
LIVES

www.somerset.gov.uk



SOMERSET
County Council

French Group – Sue MacLean:

When we started, over a year ago, we didn't realise what a strong bond we would build and how much we would laugh. I was asked by Chris, the Groups' Secretary at that time, if I would be facilitator for the new group that was starting up as I had done French to A level and I had lived in Belgium for 3 years. And so it began...

Although I was the facilitator, I made it very clear that I would not be planning everything myself, and that the group would need to decide between them what they wanted to learn and how they would progress. The first decision was to meet weekly, as everyone felt that regular practise is the only way to really learn a language. To give some structure to our sessions we decided to buy a coursebook that was aimed at lower secondary pupils, *Allez 1*. For fun, after the grammar input of the coursebook, I downloaded a French children's story each week from <https://www.thefrenchexperiment.com/stories> These stories have the benefit of being simple, a story we all know (which helps with translating) and an English translation after each paragraph. After a few weeks, as confidence grew, each session began with a couple of pre-prepared sentences on something we had done in the week. This has now grown to include something watched on television or a news story that has caught someone's eye or anything else that takes their fancy. It is also where much of the laughter comes from. There is a little competition going on to see who can come up with the funniest translation. It began with a simple, 'Mont de Jambon' (Mount of Ham – a local beauty spot) and 'jambon de l'ouest' (ham of the west-a London football team) to Mont a Mignon (mignon is French for cute), 'Le Désordre d'Eton au Boris (a dessert) and so it progresses... Now, as we listen, if I see a sparkle in someone's eye and/or hear a little chuckle I know to listen very carefully as the next sentence will be designed to test our powers of translation and to cause great hilarity.

Once we ran out of the online stories, we bought '10 Bedtime Stories in French and English' which is a book of short stories, again with a translation after each paragraph. We have now moved on to, 'Short Stories in French', which are much longer and have a vocabulary list at the end of each chapter, with a series of questions. As we read, I highlight any grammar points we have covered earlier. Everyone is also on Duolingo (family plan so there are no adverts). It began as a way to support the learning at home, with just a few minutes a day, but now, due to the highly competitive nature of our group members, everyone strives to be top of their league and to remain in the highest league, so a lot of time is spent working through the levels. This has not only helped with reinforcing basics but is another source of laughter as we discuss our cunning ploys to earn more points.

The group are now so much more confident, and their French has come along in such leaps and bounds, that they are now advanced beginners. It is a small group, which is perfect for learning a language as everyone has lots of opportunities to take a turn, speak or ask questions. We usually alternate hosting the session and the stakes are raised every week to see who will provide the best biscuits. We have also been known to have a 'working lunch' at the Hub from time to time.

It was decided to end our year with a Christmas lunch. For health reasons, I cannot be inside with large groups of people, so we decided to go to the Old Dairy, as there is a covered outdoor area which has patio heaters. As luck would have it, it was the coldest day of the year – minus 5 degrees (I took a picture of the temperature gauge in the car). The Old Dairy sent a text that morning to say that their generator had broken so there would be no heaters so they would understand if we cancelled. Undeterred, everyone turned up in

thermals, with blankets and hot water bottles. People walking past on their way inside looked in astonishment at this little group of pensioners who were wrapped up, roaring with laughter, looking like they were having a duvet day as they ate outside. Learn, Laugh, Live - the u3a strapline- which is, for me, our French group.



Memory Loss in Older Adults:

Everyday Memory Strategy Use in Healthy Adults Across the Lifespan:

Results From an Online Survey

How often do people use strategies to help their memory in everyday life? Are certain strategies used more often than others and does the strategy use in everyday life increase as we get older? While a number of questionnaires exist to assess memory strategy use in the general population, they have been developed quite a long time ago and do not assess the use of external strategies involving technology (e.g., electronic reminders, etc.). It is also unclear how frequently individuals across the adult lifespan expect such memory strategies to be used by people in age groups other than their own. For example, do members of the general public believe that older adults use memory aiding strategies more often than younger adults and, if so, which strategies do they believe are used more often by older adults?

To address these gaps in the current knowledge, researchers at the University of Hertfordshire developed a new everyday memory strategy use questionnaire. The questionnaire assessed the use of the following four types of strategies: internal strategies (e.g., mentally retracing one's steps to find the lost keys), external non-electronic aids (e.g., using a paper calendar for appointments), external electronic aids (e.g., using reminders on the phone) and multiple strategies (i.e., using more than one strategy simultaneously). The questions were created based on the real data collected in a previous diary study in which young and older individuals recorded memory strategies every time they used them in their daily lives.

This new questionnaire was circulated on various social media platforms and several branches of the University of 3rd Age (U3A) for a period of 8 months between January 2021 and August 2021. Participants had to rate the frequency with which they have used different strategies to aid memory in their own life and then rate how frequently they expected people in their 20s, 40s, 60s and 80s to use the same memory strategies. In addition, participants completed questionnaires about their mood, business, and demographic details.

For the first study aim, concerning the frequency of memory strategy use across different age groups, responses from 531 participants were analysed. Participants were divided into three age groups, which included 226 young (aged 18-39), 135 middle-aged (aged 40-59) and 170 older (aged 60-91) adults. Results showed that there were no age differences in the overall frequency with which participants reported to use various memory strategies in their daily life. In addition, a strong preference for using external memory aids/strategies was observed across all age groups. However, while young and middle-aged adults reported using electronic external memory aids more often than older adults, middle-aged and older individuals reported using non-electronic external memory aids more often than younger adults.

For the second study aim regarding how people view memory strategy use in others, the data from 310 participants were analysed. Results showed strong stereotypical views towards memory strategy use and ageing. Irrespective of participants' own age, all participants believed that increasing age is generally associated with increased use of

memory strategies. Such stereotypical views are surprising given the results of recent diary studies showing no significant age effects in the overall frequency of strategies people use to aid their memory.

In summary, this study showed that the newly developed questionnaire can assess the frequency of various memory strategy use in everyday life across the adult lifespan and can be used in the future clinical and research work on memory functioning in everyday life. Furthermore, this study confirmed that there still exist strong stereotypical views towards memory and ageing, which highlights the need to raise awareness on this matter in our society and reduce age-related stereotypes.

The research team at the University of Hertfordshire would like to thank all those who kindly volunteered to take part in our study and extend special thanks to the Chairs of many U3A branches for helping us with the recruitment. Your help and contribution to our research is greatly appreciated.

If you have any follow up question in relation to these findings, please email Dr Brigita Brazauskiene at b.brazauskiene@herts.ac.uk .

Dr Brigita Brazauskiene

Dr Ioanna Markostamou

Professor Lia Kvavilashvi

Birthdays:

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

Susan Hewitt, Nick Bowers, Helen Spens-Black.

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