



MARTOCK AND DISTRICT U3A
NEWSLETTER NO 57, APRIL 2023

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

For more information about proposed or existing groups, or if you want to join a group, contact our Group Secretary Mary Marshall at:

martocku3agroupssec1@gmail.com

For information about other aspects of this Newsletter, including the trips, contact Greg Atkins, Chair at:

chairmaru3a@gmail.com

From the Chair:

(My April Fools joke was censored – available by email on request).

In this Newsletter, we feature articles from our games groups, the Scrabble, Mah Jong and two Bridge groups, which are facilitated by Briony Pates, Pat Brett, Chris Atkins and Penny Brough. We also have proposals for a new Modern Board Gaming Group, a Walking Football Group, a restarted French Conversation Group and a new dance group. In the next issue we will feature our language groups.

A common misunderstanding I have found among u3a members is a misinterpretation of the word “University” in the original title of the organisation. There appear to be two opposing views here: one is put off by its use because they feel that it makes it appear too demanding and too much like being in school again; the other feels that it should live up to this label in terms of the rigour of group learning. These two viewpoints, as well as many shades in between, are indeed catered for by u3a activity, and neither is excluded. However, I thought it worthwhile to look at how the situation has evolved, how the word “university” originated and has been interpreted in the past, and how it

is interpreted today. So I did some Googling on the history of the u3a and hopefully came up with the true story, which is summarised below.

Monthly meetings:

Following our last meeting on Wills and Lasting Power of Attorney, our speaker Linda Fisher has offered to give free advice. Her email address is:

linda@willmanagement.co.uk

On 12th April our member John Highnam will talk about his visits to Antarctica when he lived in New Zealand, and his view of the continent. Then on 10th May David Nunn, who is a Shop Steward for the Prospect Civil Service Union, will give a talk entitled “Tolpuddle and its Martyrs”. He will introduce the Martyrs and put them into the context of 1830s Dorset. Some parts of the saga have remarkable similarities to recent events

Our monthly meetings are held in the Parish Hall on the second Wednesday of the month, doors open at 2.15pm for a 2.30 pm start. Tea and homemade cakes are served after the talk.

Scrabble Group:

The Scrabblers! We are a small, friendly group, meeting at 10am on Monday mornings. You don't have to be an expert, we are of varying experience and abilities, dictionaries allowed!

We play Scrabble and Upwords (a fun variation of Scrabble), and it makes a sociable and enjoyable start to the week. If you are interested in joining us contact Mary.



Mah Jong Group:

MAH JONG is a derivation of the Chinese word (ma.dzon) meaning sparrow. It is a tile based game developed in China in the 19th Century, commonly played

by 4 players. It is a game of skill, strategy and luck. The game is played with a set of 144 tiles based on Chinese Characters and symbols. Each player begins with 13 tiles. In turn players draw and discard tiles until they complete a set hand of which there are many. The clicking of the tiles during shuffling resembles the chattering of sparrows.

No prior knowledge of the game is necessary to join, our group is mostly made up of beginners. We meet on the second Monday of the month. If you are interested please contact Mary.



Beginners Bridge:

The group is now in its third year and has gone from strength to strength. Initially it met in the home of Chris Atkins, who also facilitates the group, and it started with 8 members. We are so lucky that Judy Watson came onboard at this time and has remained with us. Judy is an incredible player and our group is so lucky that she consistently demonstrates patience, first class tutoring and fun in order to help us progress.

Due to our success we now have 14 members and have needed to find new premises. Now we meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at 10.30am

in the Methodist Church Hall, South Petherton, breaking for holiday times. We welcome new members and all participants are welcomed warmly by us all.

Bridge:

We meet at Mow Barton on Friday each week from 11am until 1pm. This is possible because one of our members lives there and they very kindly allow us use of their lounge. At present we have 12 members and we have a very friendly group of varying ability, some more experienced than others. The group is facilitated by Penny Brough, 01935 508529.



Day trip:

We are organising a day trip on the West Somerset Railway which runs from Bishops Lydeard near Taunton to Minehead. The date has now been changed to Wednesday 31st May because 29th May is a Bank Holiday. We are fortunate in that on this new date only steam trains are running. The full adult fare is £30, but we can get a reduction to a group rate of £27 per head if 16 or more people go. It has been pointed out that direct payment for petrol may violate insurance, so it is suggested that you get together and buy lunch for your driver and her/his partner. If a large number of people are going we could think about hiring a coach. So if you want to go inform Greg Atkins. More information about the West Somerset Railway can be obtained from their website:

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

Science Group Trip:

The arrangements for the trip to the Royal Literary and Scientific Institute, Bath, have now been finalised. It is now on Wednesday 26th April. We will

meet at 10.30am in the George Car Park to pick up allocated cars. We will drive to the Charlotte Street Car Park in Bath which is close to the Institute (about 1.5h journey time to Bath). I have been advised that paying cash to your driver may invalidate insurance, so please offer to buy lunch for your driver (and his/her partner?), and/or together pay the parking charge of £6.80 for four hours. I'll leave the arrangements for this to you. We are having lunch in "The Raven" pub, which is close by the Institute, at 1pm. Then at 2pm we have a room booked in the Institute for three hours. The u3a will pay for the cost of room hire, and light refreshments will be available here. We will have a talk by the curator, Matt Williams, entitled "From Hades to the Machine Age". This is a talk covering the history of the Institute and its collection, with emphasis on Science, and will be illustrated by selected exhibits from their collection on display in the room. Then there will be a conducted tour of the current exhibition, which is entitled "Riches of the Earth: the Beauty of Minerals". The curator has requested a donation for his time, and we thought around £50 might be appropriate. So please donate at least £3 - more if you want. I will collect this in cash on the day. We aim to depart around 5pm so will be back in Martock by 7pm. The Institute is set in the Georgian heart of Bath, so if there is any free time at all this is worth viewing.

This trip is open to all u3a members so let Greg Atkins know if you want to go.

Proposed Modern Board Gaming Group:

We have received the following proposal from Adrian Sutton, who will act as the facilitator.

Are you interested in joining a Martock U3A Board Gaming Group?

Modern board games such as Carcassonne, Alhambra, Ticket to Ride, Catan, King and Queen Domino and many others are great fun to play and are very different to older games such as Monopoly and Cluedo.

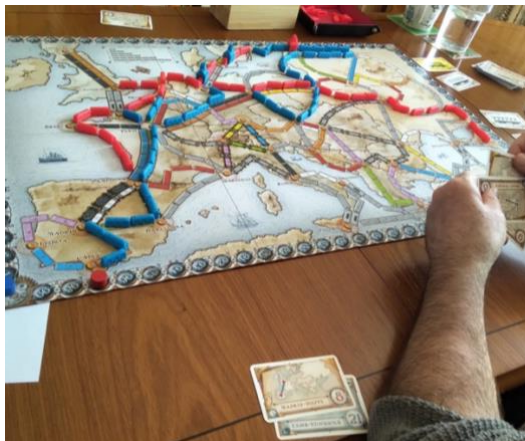
Modern board games:

- Time limited – unlike Monopoly that could go on for hours or even days!
– as the games finish when all the playing pieces are used or when a specified score is reached
- Suitable for complete beginners and those who have played before
- For 2-6 players, individual players and teams, depending on the game
- Good for mental stimulation, using maths, spatial awareness and other faculties when playing

- Can be co-operative or played as an individual and sometimes can be very competitive
- Most of all they are FUN to play!
- The down side is you may get hooked and end up buying lots of games for yourself



Carcassonne



Ticket to Ride



Catan

We would like to set up a Martock U3A Board-Gaming Group, initially at our house in Martock but with an option to move to a bigger venue if lots of people want to play.

If you would be interested in joining a Modern Board Gaming Group, please contact Mary or ring Adrian or Alison direct on 07555 033027/07759 481310. Alison and Adrian may also be contacted using their committee email addresses shown below.

French Conversation Group:

Philip Booth has volunteered to be the facilitator of a restarted French Conversation Group. If you are interested in joining this group, contact Mary. There will be more about this group in the next Newsletter.

Walking Football Group:

An effort is being made to form a walking football group. If interested contact Mary.

World/Circle Dance Group:

We have received the following proposal from Mona Mace, who will act as the facilitator:

Dancing in a circle is an ancient tradition common to many cultures; marking special occasions, the seasons and creating a sense of community and wellbeing. The dances I share come principally from the folk traditions of Eastern Europe; also new dances choreographed to world music of all kinds. Dances can be energetic and lively, or gentle and reflective. Each dance is taught, there is no audience and everyone is welcome. Come on your own or with a friend, no partner needed.

If you are interested contact Mona or Mary.

Reminder:

The committee will consider applications from group facilitators for financial support for reasonable activity, including the purchase of equipment and consumables. Any equipment purchased will become the property of Martock and District u3a. If interested please contact a committee member.

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>

History of the u3a:

The University of the Third Age was indeed founded as part of a real university. It was founded in 1973, as a branch of the University of Toulouse in France. It was intended originally to enable older people to study the academic subjects of the university. During the following years, this idea spread to other universities in France and then to other countries in continental Europe. Many of these countries still use this academic university model, and many of their branches are still associated with universities.

In the UK, our movement was founded in 1982 as the University of the Third Age, initially inspired by the French model. The name was a direct translation of the French “Université du Troisième Âge”. At the same time the Third Age Trust was registered as a charity, and local u3as are branches of the Trust, with their own Trustees (in our case committee members). However, in the UK, and in some other English speaking countries, the U3A evolved to be somewhat different to its European predecessors. Although its mission was and remains primarily to support adult learning, the definition of “learning” was broadened to include interests such as hobbies, music and sport, as well as academic subjects; it also evolved an important secondary social function. To reflect this, the name of the organisation has been changed to just u3a, using lower case letters to differentiate from the previous U3A abbreviation. More recently, the age constraint of the u3a has been removed, so that we are now open to all adults who have free time to enjoy our activities.

Birthdays:

The following have birthdays in April, according to information supplied by them to us. We wish everyone a very happy birthday.

Gordon Maskery, Sarah Wellman, Pauline Norton, Felicity Renshaw, Philip Booth, Marian Farrow.

Death of member:

Members will be saddened to hear of the death of Patricia Corrick.

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

Committee member: Alison Sutton, alisoncomm1maru3a@gmail.com

Committee member: Adrian Sutton, adriancomm2maru3a@gmail.com

Honorary President: Sue MacLean