



MARTOCK AND DISTRICT U3A
NEWSLETTER NO 58, MAY 2023

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

For 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

Talks at the monthly meetings of nearby u3as affiliated to the Avalon Group may be found on their websites listed here (admission is free for our members):

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

From the Chair:

In this issue, we feature articles from our language groups. These have undergone somewhat of a hiatus recently. We did at one time have two French groups, a German group, a Latin group and an Italian group. Until a few months ago this had dwindled to a German group which was struggling to get members, and a French Beginners group which had only four members. I'm encouraged to see that this has now changed and the language groups are beginning to thrive again, but still have some way to go. We now have a French Improvers group, which comprises the former Beginners Group that has now progressed, Spanish Conversation, three German groups at different levels, and a proposal for a restarted French Conversation Group. There is scope I believe to restart the Latin and Italian groups, the latter perhaps as a Somerset-wide inter-u3a group (see below). We need more facilitators to come forward who have the enthusiasm of Phil, Liz, Nick and Sue to get them started. Any volunteers?

We feature articles from four of the language group facilitators below. Sue wrote about her French Group in the Newsletter last February. This has four members at present, but can't take any more due to health issues. All the other language groups are open to more members, though.

Congratulations to Tony Carter and Mona Mace on successfully starting a new Modelling Group and World/Circle Dance Group - see below.

In the next issue of the Newsletter I hope to feature the Art and Crafts Groups.

Monthly meetings:

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. Then on 14th June - "A Five Year Old Could Do That": Richard Kay helps us to make sense of modern art. This talk will be chaired by Chris Atkins, who is an artist and Vice Chair.

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.

Day trip:



We are organising a day trip on the West Somerset Railway which runs from Bishops Lydeard near Taunton to Minehead, on 31st May. We are fortunate in that on this date only steam trains are running. The fare is £27, which will be collected before the trip. We are travelling there in allocated cars, which will be organised by Adrian Sutton, but 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. 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/>

THIS IS THE LAST CHANCE TO BOOK THIS TRIP- deadline 8th May.

Spanish Conversation:

From Nick Bowers, the facilitator:

The aim of our sessions is to achieve a capability in everyday social exchanges. These are the type of exchanges one has in one's interaction with bar staff, taxi drivers, waiters and casual acquaintances; the type of conversational exchanges that people have in their lives, irrespective of the country.

The intention at all times is to avoid ponderous academic constructions, and to allow easy conversational flow. Clearly some basic grammar is necessary, but this is kept to a minimum, and only introduced when appropriate.

Some historical and cultural anecdotes are introduced, with the aim of emphasising that Spain has a living, vibrant people who are fun to interact with. Your holiday and business visits to the country should prove much more enjoyable and indeed beneficial.

Please come along and enjoy the trip!

French Conversation:

This group has restarted and the following has been received from Phil Booth, the facilitator:

My initial thoughts were to have a topic for each session, decided in advance to allow those more organized amongst us to prepare and do a little vocabulary research. I am interested in keeping my own French conversation skills as in the past I found lack of use brought loss of vocabulary and fluency. I only did French to CSE level at school, but did a 3 month training course in Oil Well Testing south of Paris, and then worked for a French oilfield service Company in the Middle East and West Africa; however most business was conducted in English. My sister lived in Paris, where I was a regular visitor and made big progress with the language over a period. After that, I was UK-based for years and had little use for French apart from holidays, and lost a lot of ability here. In 2014 I got a job in Quebec for 3 years, and relearnt my conversational French albeit a la mode Quebecois, but am keen to maintain the standard.

As with all things, practice makes perfect, and using the language brings gains in vocabulary, correct use of grammar and common parlance terms, which is what I hope the group will achieve!

Mary has proposed a preliminary meeting of those interested to set the ground rules and to open up for suggestions on how it may best be run - so consider what you would like to gain from it and add your two penny worth! We can also set boundaries and decide if there will be taboo subjects (religion, politics come to mind); personally I feel that discussing these topics is much more interesting and beneficial than being PC.

I look forward to meeting you all and getting the show on the road.

German Beginners:

This is facilitated by Greg Atkins. We are a small group of five people learning elementary German. Our members have been going for some months now, so they have some knowledge of German. We meet weekly on Thursday afternoons at Greg's house and do simple exercises as homework. We have a textbook that we follow which is aimed at adult beginners, and also read simple short stories in German. We would certainly welcome new members, but at this stage they would have to have some elementary knowledge, for example remembering some school German, and the standard doesn't need to be high. If there is any interest I would think about starting again from zero knowledge.



German Improvers:

From Liz Hayden, the facilitator:

Our group of 5 meets fortnightly on a Thursday afternoon in Over Stratton. Our aim is to increase our vocabulary and build confidence in speaking the language. We have covered various topics such as food, hobbies, and the weather, and deal with the necessary grammar as it arises.

We read jokes, stories and articles in German and translate them and discuss them - not always in German! - over a cup of tea.

Always a relaxed and fun afternoon! Come and join us if you have some German already!

German Conversation:



The German Conversation Group is facilitated by Greg Atkins, and meets once a month. This is actually an inter-u3a group rather than just being associated with Martock u3a. The meetings are held from 2 to 4 pm on the third or fourth Friday of the month, depending on the availability of the room. We have members from all over Somerset, not just Martock. There are 18 members, but usually about 6-12 attend each meeting, which is an ideal number. We are fortunate in having two native German speakers in the group; four of us also attend the Advanced German evening class at Strode College. This group assumes some proficiency in German, although members do vary somewhat. We discuss a variety of topics in German, often connected with the culture and politics of German speaking countries. In the next sessions we have decided to

also read and discuss a book, *Zonenkinder* by Jana Hensel, which was a bestseller in Germany and describes a childhood in the former East Germany. We were meeting in members' houses, but we have decided to meet from now on in a central venue that should be accessible to all, Edgar Hall in Somerton. There is therefore now a small charge for attendance to cover room rental usually £3 to £4. We pool cars to get there, and for those who need it we can arrange lifts.



Inter-u3a groups:

The type of inter-u3a group represented by the German Conversation group could be a model for other subjects which may not attract sufficient members just at local level. These could be more obscure or advanced subjects, or unusual hobbies. This would be particularly advantageous to increase the variety of groups available to members of a small u3a such as ourselves, otherwise we will be confined just to the more popular subjects which attract most people. I have heard suggestions, for example, for groups on Theoretical Physics, Danish and Astronomy. Such groups may not attract enough interest in Martock, but might in Somerset as a whole. I obtained the members of the current group by laboriously writing to all the u3as I could find in Somerset (other than those near Bath or Bristol), and asking them to put a piece in their Newsletters, and all did. This paid off, and the group has been running successfully now for about three years, including online during the lockdown. We started with around ten members, and have grown to the present size as people heard about us. However, the procedure for starting such groups could

be simplified, perhaps by giving appropriate contacts on the Avalon website. At the moment there is no u3a framework for such inter-u3a groups, other than within the narrow confines of Avalon, and this needs to be addressed. Just to comply with current u3a regulation, we all joined Wells u3a at £10 each, but they understand that this is just nominal, and I have asked them not to list us as one of their groups. However, this is not a satisfactory situation; such groups need to be recognised as part of the u3a framework, and their establishment actively encouraged.

Update on the new Modelling Group:

From Tony Carter, the facilitator:

During April's meeting a variety of topics were discussed such as how to make a model train layout run more efficiently and not distort under the weight of an engine and how to make a newly built model hovercraft operate and steer correctly. It is surprising how a different interest and approach can result in a simple answer, which in both cases, resulted in these particular modelling problems being resolved.

A visit was made to a model show in Yeovil to look at the different areas of this hobby sector. The intention was to get new ideas and thoughts from other people's experiences and to establish new contacts. One outcome of this was that we were invited to a club meeting to see indoor model airplane flying. After seeing these impressive rubber-powered planes in action, I have started assembling the kit I bought at the show. I hope to provide a successful update later!

We also visited Yeovil Model Boat Club's pond to see radio controlled boats in action, which is my own particular interest.

We are always looking for new members so whatever your modeling interests please contact Tony Carter, 07966644260.

Update on World/Circle Dance Group:

This will soon start and a free taster session will be held at Ash Village Hall soon. If interested contact Mona Mace at:

pubmaru3a@gmail.com

Interested in History?

Unfortunately the Local History Group has disbanded and the Family History Group appears to be struggling. However, there does appear to be interest, and it

may be worthwhile trying to restart either one or perhaps forming a more general History Group. Any volunteers?

Holiday in Northumbria:

The following has been submitted by Jane Redgrove of Somerton u3a. I understand that, following her presentation at our recent monthly meeting, she already has two takers from Martock u3a.

Somerton u3a presents: The Historic Houses, Heritage and Art of Northumbria. This 5 day holiday starts on 5th October and prices start from £569. Insurance available at £31.

We will be travelling by luxury coach. Pick up points are likely to be Curry Rivel, Langport and Somerton. We can provide safe parking in Curry Rivel and Somerton.

There will be a Blue Badge guide on days 2-4.

Full details can be viewed on line at www.tailored-travel.co.uk and quote reference sstu231.

Or contact Jane Redgrove. Tel: 01458 899962, email:

redgrove@btinternet.com

Completed booking forms should be sent to Jane by the end of May.

Somerton U3A presents

The Historic Houses, Heritage & Art of Northumbria

5 days from £569 Departing 5th October 2023

tailored travel
Inspiring Group Tours

FEATURES

- First board accommodation
- All excursion travel & guided tours included
- Blue Badge guide included on Days 2 to 4
- Executive coach throughout

WHAT WE WILL SEE

- Kedleston Hall
- Durham – guided tour
- Durham
- Bamburgh Open Air Museum
- Bamburgh
- Lindisfarne Priory
- The Spanish Gallery – guided tour
- The Domesday Museum – guided tour
- Calkie Abbey

ACCOMMODATION

We stay four nights on a first board basis at the 4* Best Western Plus Galilee Hotel (www.galileehotel.co.uk) at Widdowham, four miles south west of Newcastle. It is located in the centre of this historic village, facilities at the hotel include Foco's Restaurant that offers a high standard of cuisine and the Egyptian sty & Sphinx bar with its superb panoramic views over the Tyne Valley. All rooms are en suite and feature telephone, television, tea & coffee making facilities and a hairdryer.

EXTRAS TO YOUR TOUR

- Single room supplement £38
- Insurance (including Covid cover) £31
- Entrance fees to places visited as part of this itinerary (National Trust properties free to N.T. members & English Heritage properties free to E.H. members)
- Quil-lies
- Lunches

Prices based on 14/20 double share. Minimum numbers required. Normal booking conditions

For more information on this tour contact your Group Organizer

Jane Redgrove
Tel: 01458 899962
Email: redgrove@btinternet.com
62 Pearmain Road, Somerton TA11 6AY

Lindisfarne Priory

View and share this tour online - click on View Your Tour at www.tailored-travel.co.uk and quote sstu231

Brimsmore Gold Club:

The following message has been obtained from Elizabeth Kirtley, the facilitator of the Gardens Group:

I have arranged the Brimsmore Gold Club 25% discount event for Monday 5th June at 6pm. We will meet in the cafe at 6pm for a complimentary tea or coffee and a short talk about the plants available and then we are free to browse and buy. The 25% discount does not apply to items already reduced or furniture. Free delivery within the usual radius will apply. They usually endeavour to deliver items within the next few days.

Committee news:

We welcome Alison and Adrian Sutton to the committee. At present Alison is helping us with the Beacon software we use for collation and communication, and Adrian will help organise the West Somerset Railway trip. We have decided that from now on, in the interests of transparency, we will post our committee minutes on our website.

Lapsed members:

We currently have a large number of members whose membership has lapsed but have not renewed it. Lapsed members do not receive the Newsletter and theoretically should not participate in groups or attend monthly meetings. We are not very strict on the latter at present, but we may have to tighten up. Many lapsed members may indeed be members who have moved away or who have resigned. However, it is also clear to me on perusing the names that some of these are members who are currently active. So if this applies to anyone you know, PLEASE ask them to renew their membership. We rely on you all to provide our income! I will send a circular out to just lapsed members to remind them of this.

Coronation Event:

We will have a stall at the event being organised by Martock Parish Council in the Recreation Ground on the bank holiday on 8th May. See you there.

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

Death of members:

Members will be saddened to hear of the deaths of Ann Manners and Pete Knight.

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