



NEWSLETTER NO 62 September 2023

From the Chair:

I hope you all had an enjoyable August. We are now getting back into full gear again at Martock u3a. In this issue I feature the Science and Philosophy groups that I facilitate, which are at the more academic end of the u3a spectrum. However, no prior qualifications are needed to participate in these groups, just a willingness to learn and stretch your intellect. In the next issue I will feature our literary groups, the Book Club, the Play Reading Group, and the Theatre Group.

Because of the increasing amount of material we are receiving from other organisations, I have decided to divide the Newsletter into two sections, the first on our u3a business, the second on material submitted by outside organisations that may be of interest to our members.

Subscription for 2023/4:

We are pleased to announce that the subscription for the coming financial year (October 2023-September 2024) will remain the same at £17 for a single member and £30 for a couple.

Annual General Meeting:

This will take place prior to the talk on Wednesday 11th October. Before this, I will send out an agenda, a call for nominations for committee membership and officers, an annual report, minutes of the last AGM and financial statements. If you have any questions or concerns, we'll address them at the AGM. Hopefully the AGM can be dealt with quickly before the talk.

We ask that as many members as possible attend the AGM. If you cannot attend, please send in your apologies to our Secretary, Pat Brett.

Monthly meetings:

On Wednesday 13th September Ian Winkle presents "The Geological Background

to the Island of Tenerife". Ian Winkle talks to us about his special interest in Geology. Ian is a member of Yeovil u3a and owned a time share on Tenerife in the Canary Islands. We had to previously postpone this talk due to the death of the Queen.

The photo below shows Mount Teide, which is the mountain that dominates Tenerife and is the highest mountain in all Spanish territory. It is an active volcano, having last erupted in 1909.



Then on 11th Oct – “Alberto Bioletti and the French Parole Prisoners in Wincanton”. John Baxter presents the life of an extraordinary man, a talk based on his recent book.

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 cake are served after the talk.

Open day:

We will be holding an Open Day on Wednesday 18th October 2pm to 4pm in the Parish Hall to showcase our group activities, allow potential members to chat to group facilitators and committee members, and to give people an opportunity to join.

Group facilitators should plan a show table and set up a list to sign so that potential members are recorded. Let Mary know that you are doing this, and make sure your table is continually manned by members of the group during the two hours. **Now is the time to think about this.**

If you are planning a new group, this is a good time to showcase it. Again, make a sign, a list to record potential members, and let Mary know.

It might be a good idea to publicise your group beforehand and let people know that you will be present. “Martock Chat” on Facebook is a good place to advertise since they have a group membership of 5,300, greater than the entire

population of Martock! This may be particularly important if you are thinking of establishing a new group, as people who are not yet u3a members may be interested, and remember membership is no longer age restricted.

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 Avalon website.

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

Somerton u3a:

As Somerton is only a short drive away (about 20min), and they have excellent facilities in Edgar Hall (we hold our German Conversation Group there), I thought it worth exploring the possibility of collaboration with them. They have, for example, Italian, Photography and Birdwatching groups, which went defunct here. I attended their Enrolment Day on 25th August and set up a table for Martock u3a there. They will do the same at our Open Day on 18th October. Several of their members indicated an interest in our groups, and members of Martock u3a can attend Somerton u3a free of charge under the Avalon agreement and *vice versa*. Further details may be found on their website:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/somerton/home>

Science Group Trip:

On 27th September the Science Group is organising a trip to the Bournemouth Oceanarium, which is open to all u3a members. This houses not only marine fish and other marine life, but also penguins and seals. It is close to the pier, which we can also visit, and we intend to have lunch in the renowned Harry Ramsden's fish and ship restaurant which is also close by. There is a large car park there and we are organising lifts. It should be quieter there than as the school holidays have ended and the holiday season is over. The entrance fee is £13 for seniors for the Oceanarium and £1.50 for the pier, and you will also be expected to contribute to lunch for your driver. This is the last chance to book this trip, if interested contact Greg Atkins a.s.a.p.

Science and Philosophy Groups:

These groups are both facilitated by Greg Atkins and meet at similar times in the Function Room of The George, 10am to 12pm, Philosophy on the first

Wednesday of the month, Science on the fourth Wednesday. Although they appear to be different subjects, they are to some extent interactive, and at times we have considered similar topics in both groups. (Although there is some disagreement in the Philosophy Group on the degree to which Science and Philosophy are related). Indeed, until about 200 years ago they were considered the same subject, and at the university where I worked the present “Faculty of Science” was called the “School of Natural Philosophy” until about 20 years ago, and a science research degree is still called a “Doctor in Philosophy” (Ph.D. or D. Phil.).

When Martock u3a started in 2017, I tried to start both Philosophy and Science groups. However, only Philosophy was successful, attracting 6 of us then, but Science had only three people interested including myself, so was not viable. I therefore looked further afield to Yeovil u3a, and managed to start a Science Group there, initially with only 5 people. We got going, however, in the South Street Centre, and after a couple of years we had grown to 28 members, many of them new u3a members. We also spent a period collaborating with Taunton u3a Science Group, which meant that on some occasions we had combined audiences of around 60. Then came the lockdown, but we kept going with most people online. After the lockdown I tried in Martock u3a again, and was more successful this time, but initially again with only a small number of members.

The Science and Philosophy Groups began meeting in the living room of our house. After we had grown somewhat, we transferred to the dining room, which is bigger, and when necessary, used our TV to show PowerPoint presentations. Both groups grew however, and we attracted new members, many of whom were from different areas (as far away as Wincanton) and new to Martock u3a; several of these new members joined both groups. However, at the last Science session in our house we had 16 members present, which was a real squeeze in our dining room, so then I decided to transfer both groups to The George. This now necessitates a charge of £3 to £4 per person per session, depending on attendance, to cover room rental, but their facilities are excellent and a big improvement.

With both these groups, the aim is to achieve a significant, meaningful and demanding level of discussion, and to educate and above all achieve insight. We welcome new members of any background and no prior knowledge, who wish to sharpen and stretch their intellect.

Philosophy Group:

The format is usually for a member to introduce a topic and provide a small amount of reading material and/or YouTube video(s) before the meeting. We

then sit in a semi-circle to discuss the topic. The aim here is not to “win” an argument or score points, but to understand every person's viewpoint, and we try to include everyone in the discussion. It’s OK to disagree, provided this is done in a friendly and understanding manner. We aim for penetrating and informative discussion, but we rarely reach a conclusion or consensus on any topic, although we hope our understanding is extended and our knowledge and wisdom improved.

Topics we have covered recently include:

Stoicism, The Philosophy of Aristotle, Modern Morality, Kate Rayworth’s Doughnut Economics, Ecomodernism, Monarchism, Shamanism, the Supernatural, and Humanism. We covered “Patriarchy in Science”, Rupert Sheldrake’s “Science Delusion”, James Lovelock’s “Ghia” Hypothesis, and Iain McGilchrist’s Philosophy based on Neuroscience jointly with the Science Group. Topics to be covered in future meetings include Fascism, John Rawls’ Philosophy of Justice, Roger Scruton’s Philosophy of Conservatism, Ivan Illich’s Philosophy of Education, and the Anthropic Principle (jointly with the Science Group).

The photo below shows the Philosophy Group as we were before we acquired new members and moved to The George:



Science Group:

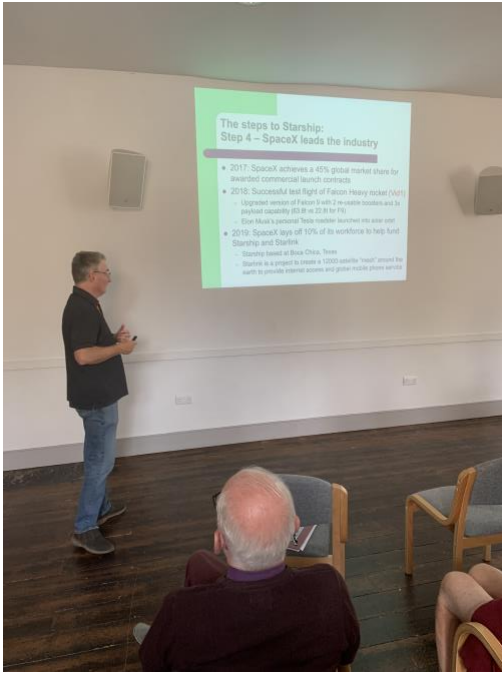
In this group the format is that a member or an outside speaker gives a talk, followed by questions and a discussion. We have also used some of our sessions to go on trips to nearby places of scientific interest. These trips are open to all u3a members, not just the Science Group.

Topics we have included in the talks are: COVID-19, Old Age - Don't Take it Lying Down, Mud, The Lost Tribes of Humanity, The History of Computing, Influenza Virus, and Elon Musk's SpaceX Project. We also had an outside speaker, Caroline Brown, a retired Lecturer from the West of England University, who spoke about brain function, a talk that interacted with our Philosophy Group meeting on Iain McGilchrist. Planned future talks are on The Therapeutic use of Bacteriophages and Climate Change.

Since we started about two years ago, we have also been on three trips. The first was to "We the Curious" (formerly the Science Museum) in Bristol. Unfortunately, part of the building burnt down the day after we went and it was closed for several months afterwards; it was nothing to do with us of course, but I did wonder why David Isaac was so long in the toilet. The second trip was to the Etches Collection in Kimmeridge, Dorset. This exhibits an interesting collection of fossils, mostly from the area, and mostly collected by just one person. We heard an excellent talk by Steve Etches himself, and then went to the nearby Kimmeridge Bay, where many of the fossils in the collection were collected. Finally, we went to The Royal Literary and Scientific Institution in Bath, where we had lunch in the historic Raven pub and heard a talk on the museum by the Curator. We are planning a trip the Bournemouth Oceanarium on September 27th; if you are interested in going contact Greg Atkins (see above).

The photo below shows one of the specimens we saw on display in the Etches Collection in Kimmeridge, an almost complete ichthyosaur skeleton, which featured in David Attenborough's BBC TV programme "The Sea Dragon".





The photos above are of our recent Science Group meeting at the end of June. It was our last meeting before we adjourned for the summer and was more sparsely attended than usual but does show our new facility in The George.

Birthdays:

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

Chris Atkins, Brigitte Drury, Sandra Fairhead, Elizabeth Barnard, Mary Taylor, Patricia Homer, Vivienne Brisset.

Back copies of this Newsletter and the National u3a Newsletter, as well as minutes of our committee meetings, may be found on our website:

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

For more information about proposed or existing groups, or if you want to join a group, contact our Groups 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

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

NOTICES FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Somerset Arts Week:



Somerset artists are making final preparations for this autumn's Somerset Open Studios event, with a flurry of activity in creative spaces across the county. This autumn will see the first full Open Studios event since 2018, with over 300 artists taking part.

During this time the usual yellow directional signs, posters and the printed catalogue will be in evidence throughout Somerset and of course here in Martock. Catalogues will be freely available at the library and other venues around the town.

Discovering what goes on in artists' studios can often be enlightening and surprising. Process can be explained, and it is also the chance to meet its artist or maker.

For both artists and visitors, it's a chance to forge a relationship and a unique opportunity to find out what lies behind the intrigue of an image or hand-crafted object. It's also an opportunity for the casual viewer, the curious, to see what goes on behind normally closed studio doors.

Martock and surrounding areas have of course got artists taking part, both those who have experience of doing open studios and others like me who are first timers. All of our studios will welcome visitors and all the information needed to find us is detailed in the catalogue.

Artists love to talk about their creativity so will warmly welcome all. If you were at Richard Kay's last U3A talk you might remember how informative that was. We would now love you to come to see us in our working environments to enjoy looking at our work, instigating dialogue and opening our notebooks to find out where the germ of a new project is often documented.

Chris Atkins

Wells Festival of Literature:

This is being held on 27th October to 4th November. It features 16 authors giving talks discussing their books; these include, Wes Streeting, the Shadow Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, the Guardian journalist Polly Toynbee and Chris Patten, the last British Governor of Hong Kong. There are also other activities. I have leaflets and if anybody wants one, they can ask me at the next monthly meeting. The full programme can be found here:

<https://www.wellsfestivalofliterature.org.uk>

Made in Dagenham” musical – message from organiser:



I'm part of CUDOS (Crewkerne United Dramatic Operatic Society) and we'll be performing the musical MADE IN DAGENHAM in September at the Victoria Hall, Crewkerne. I've attached a poster for you. The show is based on the true story of the equal pay protests in the 60s at the Ford Factory in Dagenham. I'm sure many of your members will remember or know of those strikes! It's a very funny and heartwarming musical with a fantastically talented cast of all ages on stage.

We'd love to welcome you into our audience. Tickets can be bought on an individual basis, or we have a group discount offer where a group of 10 only pay for 9 (this offer isn't online, you would need to call 01460 74380 to organise).

Kind Regards, Lucy Singleton 07967301747

Iminster Thursday Group:

I have been asked to circulate the following programme. Guests are welcome.

November 16th **Folk Songs in Somerset as collected by Cecil Sharp** David Sutcliffe

A look at the rich tradition of local folk songs preserved by collector Cecil Sharp in the late 19th / early 20th century.

November 23rd **Avalon Archaeology – The Past Recreated**

Dr Richard Brunning

The reconstruction buildings that have been created over the last 7 years at the newly opened Avalon Archaeology site near Glastonbury. They include a Roman villa dining room, with working hypocaust, a richly decorated Saxon longhall, and an Iron Age roundhouse (under construction).

November 30th **Collections in the National Trust's South Somerset Houses** Sonja Rogers

The collections at Montacute House, Lytes Cary Manor, Barrington Court and Tintinhull House, how they have been brought together, their significance, what are collected, recent acquisitions and offers.

Committee Members 2023/2024

Ngar Whiteford- <i>Chairman</i> -	07434 690190	Membership Secretary - Lesley Lusby -	01460 57914
Sue Morley - <i>Sec / Prog Sec (Aut 2023)</i> -	01460 53378	Janet Gould - <i>Joint Prog Sec (Spr 2024)</i> -	01460 54016
Barry Welsh - <i>Treasurer</i> -	01460 53087	Liz Hayden - <i>Joint Prog Sec (Spr 2024)</i> -	01460 249580
David Dick & Angela Sissons -	01460 55940	Jane Pearce - <i>Publicity Secretary</i> -	01460 259596
		Alison Brown - <i>Outings Secretary</i> -	01460 929642

Membership - subscriptions are £25 for the year (20 talks) / £13 for one term (10 talks).

Visitors - Visitors are welcome to attend, subject to the availability of space, on payment of a fee of £3.

Insurance Disclaimer - The Ilminster Thursday Group cannot be held responsible for any personal accident, loss, damage or theft of members' personal property. Members are covered against proven liability to third parties

Would you like to learn British Sign Language?

Adrian Sutton is hoping to facilitate a 10-week Beginners' course, led by a BSL approved teacher. Subject to sufficient interest, the course will start on Monday 16 October 2023, 6.30 pm - 8.30 pm at Martock Christian Fellowship.

The fee will be £85.50 - £92.00 (includes tuition & room hire) depending on the number of students – 10-20 required. Full fee payable by 4 October, non-refundable provided minimum number for course is achieved.

To book your place & for further information contact Adrian on

adrianbslmartock@gmail.com

or 07759 481310.