



NEWSLETTER NO 64 November 2023

From the Chair:

Welcome to the November Newsletter, where we include articles from the Cycling Group, the Lunch Group and the Gardens Group. In the next Newsletter I hope to cover the Mindfulness Group, the Eastern Dancing Group, the Family History Group and the Model Group. This should conclude coverage of groups that I have down as functioning since October 2022, but if you facilitate or are a member of a group that has not been included, my apologies and please get in touch, we'll include you in the next issue. We are also always open to suggestions of new groups.

At its last meeting the committee considered further the welcome we give to new members. We are preparing lanyards for committee members to wear at monthly meetings so they can be recognised. I am also going to continue to ask new members to make themselves known at monthly meetings so we may recognise them and welcome them personally. Although we remain an organisation mainly for older retired people, as a national movement we also welcome and encourage younger members, so please encourage anyone you know who is not in full time employment or raising a family to consider joining (although younger membership applicants in Martock under the age of 50 now require committee approval).

Monthly meetings:

On 8th November Jane Robinson will talk about Chinese Medicine. This meeting will be chaired by Sue Roberts.

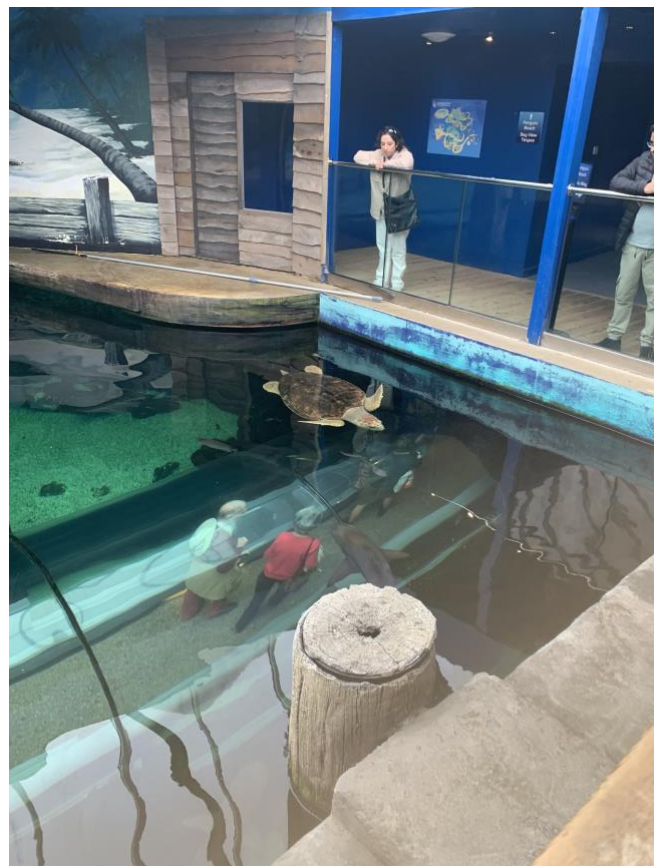
Our monthly meetings are held in the Parish Hall on the second Wednesday of the month; doors open at 2.15pm for a 2.30 pm start. Tea or coffee and homemade cake (including gluten-free) are served after the talk.

Christmas event:

This will be held on Wednesday 13th December in the Parish Hall; doors open at 2.15pm for a 2.30 pm start. Tea or coffee and mince pies will be served. It will feature performances by our ukulele and recorder groups, plus the Somer singers, followed by a fun quiz on radio and TV programmes from the 60s, 70s and 80s, with prizes for the winning team and runners up.

Science Group Trip to Bournemouth:

The Science Group had a wonderful trip to Bournemouth last month; we had lunch at the renowned Harry Ramsden's fish and chip restaurant, then visited the nearby Oceanarium. This houses otters, penguins, turtles and crocodiles as well as fish. The weather was kind to us, so we also enjoyed the sea air.



Look for the turtle and the fish in the above photo on the right, and two of our members walking along the tunnel under this very large tank.

As a hobby I collect rare tropical fish and I have four tanks in a purpose built shed in our garden. I noticed that I have several of the fish that are exhibited in Bournemouth Oceanarium. More on that in the next Newsletter.

Future Trips:

We are planning a trip to Wookey Hole in April or May, more details on that later. Next Autumn Elizabeth Kirtley has suggested a trip to the National Arboretum at Westonbirt, near Tetbury in Gloucestershire, which she will organise. If enough interest is shown, we plan to hire a coach for this trip. A trip has also been suggested to Bletchley Hall in Buckinghamshire, possibly during the summer. This was the institution where Alan Turing and colleagues developed some of the first computer technology during the Second World War, initially to solve the German Enigma Code. However, this would be about a 3h trip by car, a bit longer by coach. One possibility would be to stay there overnight, but this would clearly increase the cost. How do people feel about this?

Committee news:

Susie Stakes stepped down as Membership Secretary after serving her full three-year term, and Mona Mace stepped down as Publicity Secretary after serving a year, at the AGM. We thank them both for their service. They will be replaced by Alison Sutton as Membership Secretary and Adrian Sutton as Publicity Secretary, who were both already co-opted committee members. We welcome two new committee members, Carol Youngson and Phil Booth.

Open Day:

Our Open Day recruited ten new members and a new group on Modern Board Games was established by Adrian Sutton; several other established groups recruited new members. We thank our Groups Secretary Mary for her hard work in organising it and Chris and Alison S for assisting her.

Grants for equipment purchase:

A grant of £60 has been awarded to the French Improvers Group for purchase of books. If your group wishes to purchase equipment for u3a activity, please let your facilitator know and we will consider it. All equipment purchased becomes the property of Martock and District u3a. Applications should be addressed to any committee member.

Purchase of PA sound system:

Due to recurrent difficulties with the sound system in the Parish Hall, we have purchased a compact PA sound system recommended by Don Reed for future

use; we are grateful to him for this recommendation. This is available to groups for u3a use, so please contact Greg Atkins if you wish to make use of it.

Cycling Group:

From John Bailey, facilitator:

We meet monthly on Tuesday mornings at a date agreed one month ahead. We all take a turn leading and organising. We are social cyclists who stick together and stop for tea about half to three quarters of the way round. We usually start and finish at Martock Precinct.

Lunch Group:

From Ken Smith, facilitator:

The Lunch Group has been in existence for several years but in spite of COVID and rampant inflation problems has grown in popularity more recently, so that we now have over 40 members, with lunch attendances of about 12-15.

The intention is to provide opportunities for members to meet for lunch in a relaxed, friendly environment, so venues (pubs) are chosen which are not too distant, have easy, accessible park, preferably on site, and where the menu is not too expensive but also not too basic! Seating which allows all our attendees to sit reasonably close together is also a requirement, to allow ample opportunity for socialising. This formula seems to work and our gatherings are indeed very relaxed and friendly, and very welcoming to newcomers.

The club operates by the leader choosing a venue (suggestions welcomed) about once a month and offering this to all members by email. Because our numbers will usually be over 10, the venues ask for menu choices in advance, and this is achieved by asking everyone to select from the venue's website menu and advise the leader accordingly. This too does seem to work quite well.

There is also the possibility that we will run a Sunday Lunch Group, and this is being trialled now. If there is enough interest, the intention would be to run it occasionally, but avoiding clashes with the "normal" set-up. It would be fun as part of the existing Group for this reason.

Garden Group:

From Elizabeth Kirtley, facilitator:

The Garden group is one of the largest in Martock and District u3a, we began with about 5 members right at the start and could meet in each other's homes. The plan, to begin with, was to have a few garden visits, meet to talk about gardening problems, swap seeds and plants, and visit each other's gardens. However, the group soon grew to about 16 people, and numbers remained relatively stable for the first two years, although it soon became clear that visiting gardens, and enjoying tea and cake became a crucial part of the agenda. At this stage, we still had two members who had enough room to host the group, and in the winter would meet at one of them for a garden quiz.

To begin with, we did plant wildflowers at the stone and wooden village entrance markers, watered and tended them but found that the council grass-cutting people simply mowed them down, so we sadly had to abandon that idea.

We now have 45 members, after a recent pruning, and although a number of times we have asked the group to split into two, no-one wishes to do that. It does make the group quite unwieldy and far less cosy than it used to be. During this last year though a number of garden visits were organised, including to Killerton and Knightshayes, both National Trust gardens in Devon. A Gold Club talk and discount evening to Brimsmore in June, Willow Cottage, Barrington Open Gardens, a member's garden, and Athelhampton House and Gardens in July, we found that numbers actually attending were much lower than in previous years. I'm not sure if this is because we are out of lockdown and people are spending more time with family and having holidays away.

Our September meeting was at the Hub, the new office park, with landscaped grounds, wonderful parking, and a garden full of healthy vegetables and flowers, planted using the no-dig method by Lara Honor, a most inspirational and enthusiastic gardener. This site is on Stoke Road, the last right turning as you leave the village. Lara has great plans for extending the planting and using the remainder of the old farm buildings. She also has taken on two or three allotments at Chilthorne Domer to involve the children from the primary school and they all have a wonderful time planting, growing, and being creative. Incidentally, a number of our u3a garden group members volunteer at the Hub site and really enjoy it.

Our next meeting is on Thursday 19th of October when we will be visiting The Walled Garden at Cannington. We meet for coffee first, to congregate, and do our walk, which depending on the mobility and agility of members usually finds us morphing into smaller groups as we wander. We will be having lunch at the Malt Shovel in Cannington and then on to a National Garden Scheme garden at Model Farm, Bridgwater for the afternoon. On these outings, we try

to car share where possible, it makes it more fun and gives us a chance to get to know each other better.

In November I think we will be visiting Stourhead but next November 2024 we are planning a coach visit to Westonbirt Arboretum in Gloucestershire. We will be having a 53-seat coach and hope as many of you as possible will come. December will see us meeting at a pub near a house and garden to visit or garden centre for our Christmas lunch.

Because we have been running right from the Martock and District u3a start, we do revisit gardens occasionally, and although it would be good to venture further afield, I find a reluctance from members to do so. So perhaps the time has come to have a 'local' group and a more venturesome group, we shall see how the group evolves. Spending a night away for a two-day Cornwall visit has been suggested to me.

We do still welcome new members, garden visit suggestions, seed and plant swaps and will be very happy if you wish to join us.

Somerton u3a Raspberry Pi Group:

If anybody is interested in learning computer programming, software and networking skills, Laurence Reeves, who is the leader of Somerton u3a Raspberry Pi Group, will be talking to the Science Group on 22nd November 10am to 12pm in The George. All are welcome and attendance at Somerton u3a groups is free to Martock u3a members.

Birthdays:

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

Sue Seeley, Sheila Maybury, Pam Miller, Vivienne Fletcher, Trish Port, Jenny Becker, Geoffrey Hael, Jacqueline Martin, Ann Campbell, Jean Hockey, Amanda Bayley, Kay Durrant, Jane Horsey, Martyn Atkins, Jill Frost

New Members:

We welcome the following new members and wish them an enjoyable experience with us:

Patricia and Andrew Toosey, Jill Frost, Kathryn Aspinall, Rosalyn Bowers, Keith Beattie, Jo and Michael Greatwich, Peter Franche, Christine Morphett, Anne

Shirley, Norma Smyth, Gaynor and Richard Talley, Meryl Townsend, Mandy Lee, Rod Page and Rosemary Thomson.

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; due to the Avalon agreement, our members do not have to pay subscription. A list of websites of member u3as may be found here on the Avalon website.

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

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 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.

New committee (approved at the AGM on October 11th):

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: Alison Sutton 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: Adrian Sutton pubmaru3a@gmail.com

Committee member: Carol Youngson

Committee member: Phil Booth

Official email addresses for new committee members will follow.

Honorary President: Sue MacLean (not a *de facto* committee member but attends committee meetings by invitation).

NOTICES FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS

From John Highnam:

"History of St Catherine's Day" - November 25th 10am to 1pm.

A Coffee Morning with a difference with all the highlights of this beautiful old church on display. Guided tours and a rolling pp show too. Trips up the tower for the fitter folks (bring a camera).

St Catherine's, Church St, Drayton TA10 0JY.

Petition:

Hedgehogs are becoming increasingly rare in this country, but we still have some in this area. At present they are not given special protection under the law, and this petition to the UK Government aims to remedy this.

Protect Hedgehogs: Add Them to Schedule 5 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

<https://chng.it/RyzTz8rLqn>

From Gemma Ruffle:



I am contacting you from Somerset Council in my role of Volunteer Recruitment Manager. I am looking to visit organisations to talk to members and/or advertise our volunteering opportunity of transporting non-urgent patients to hospital, this is a very rewarding role which directly helps our NHS. If interested contact Gemma directly:

<gemma.ruffle@somerset.gov.uk>:

From Jules Reilly:

Fancy a go at Morris Dancing?

Dr Turberville's Morris Taster Session:

- **Tuesday 14th November**
- **8pm - 10pm**
- **Ash Village Hall, TA12 6NS**
- **A brilliantly fun way to socialise and keep fit!**

Any questions, email us at:
drturbervilleinfo@gmail.com

All welcome!

Free!

Please park at the school!