



NEWSLETTER NO 65 December 2023

From the Chair:

Welcome to the December Newsletter, where we include articles from the Mindfulness Group and the Modelling Group. This should conclude coverage of groups that I have down as functioning since October 2022. Most groups have progressed and acquired new members, so I will be repeating this process soon to give updates and recent news.

In the meantime, I will try a different approach: many of us have interests or hobbies which may or may not be connected with our u3a activity, so I am going to ask members to write about those. If you have a particular interest which you would like to write about or promote, please get in touch. Even if it is not currently connected with the u3a, it may have the potential to start a new group, either within our own u3a or as an inter-u3a group, if you can find like-minded people. I will start this process by writing about my hobby of tropical fish keeping in the next issue, but then I will approach other members to write about their interests.

I have been asked to publish the complete list of talks at monthly meetings, rather than just mention the next two here. Therefore, I am listing our monthly meetings up to September 2024, which is as far as we have booked. If anybody has suggestions of interesting or informative speakers we could book after then, please get in touch.

The speakers have been booked by our Events Secretary Mal Nelson Hedge, and we are grateful to her for booking such an interesting and varied set of speakers, as she has also done for past speakers. Mal has been ill recently, and we wish her a speedy recovery.

Monthly meetings:

Regarding the last talk, if you are interested in the view of the NHS on Chinese Medicine, and on Complementary and Alternative Medicine in General, it is given here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/complementary-and-alternative-medicine/>

Specific advice on acupuncture is given here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/acupuncture/>

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.

A complete list of our talks up to September 2024 is shown below:

13th December:

Christmas event – see below.

10th Jan:

Low Maintenance Gardening.

The Gold Club (Speaker from Brimsmore Garden Centre to be advised). At this meeting a date for their discount evening should be set and discount bulb vouchers should be available.

14th Feb:

How to Catch Flu.

Greg Atkins, Retired Professor of Virology. How recent research has explained why flu pandemics and epidemics arise and given insights into how they may be combatted.

13th March:

Much More than Merely Matchstick Men - The Profound Art of L S Lowry.
Richard Kay.

10th April

Impressions of Berlin in 1963.

Ian Munro, who is our current auditor, shares photos and first-hand experiences.

8th May

Our Divided Brain

Caroline Brown, retired Psychologist and Lecturer, gives insight into the way our brains work.

12th June:

Keep Bees Without Fuss or Chemicals.

Joe Bleasdale will talk about his experiences of 45 years of beekeeping in Hampshire and Somerset.

10th July:

Possible talk on breast cancer from Cancer Research UK, details to be arranged.

No meeting in August.

11th Sept:

The History of Martock

Fergus Dowding.

Christmas event:

This will be held on Wednesday 13th December in the Parish Hall; doors open at 2.00pm for refreshments, followed by the start of the entertainment at 2.30pm. Mulled wine, tea or coffee and homemade mince pies will be served. It will feature performances by the Somer Singers and our ukulele and recorder groups, 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.

Future Trips:

We are planning a day trip to Wookey Hole, tentatively on 29th May. Please let me know if you are interested. It may be unwise for anybody with mobility problems to visit the caves themselves, but there are many other attractions there, including Adventure Golf, a museum, the Enchanted Valley, and shops and cafes. Entry is £21.45 for seniors. Depending on demand we will either arrange car lifts or a minibus.

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?

U3a equipment:

A grant of £74 has been awarded to the German Beginners 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.

We now have available a laser printer, laminator and PA sound system which members can use free of charge. If you wish to use any of these, contact Greg Atkins.

Mindfulness Group:

From Mary Marshall, facilitator:

Our group uses the experience of its members, books and recorded media to assist us in achieving a beautiful, totally relaxed state of mind and body. We meet in a member's home and simply relax into a chair or sofa - no lotus positions for us. You are also welcome to lie on the floor, but only if you can get yourself up! The benefits are many, and the practice of mindfulness - observing in detail and enjoying what our senses give us in the moment, and meditation, are used commonly by health practitioners, faiths and community groups these days, as too much stress and anxiety are harmful to all. We are also a wonderfully relaxed social group, too!

Modelling Group:

From Tony Carter, facilitator:

Due to other commitments, it has been a bit quiet during the summer months for actual modelling, however we have still managed to hold our monthly discussion sessions. It can sometimes be difficult working away by yourself to make something and then coming up against a problem, or not having the correct tool or skill to complete the task and not knowing who to ask for help, which was why the Modelling Group was originally set up and, of course, visiting other people's sheds, which is always good fun.

Derek who is building a model railway layout in his spare bedroom has been working on the layout's control system which will be fully automated with changing points, and 2 or 3 trains running at the same time and stopping at stations to give the layout realism. This is where I just listen; I can cut wood and glue it together but electronic interfaces!!! but now I know the person to ask.

For the local u3a open day Derek made a train layout in a box and, using his newly found electronic skills, managed to have the train moving.



For me, boat building has been temporarily sidelined after the completion of my gaff-rigged boat.



My new hobby is indoor flying, something that I had previously never seen or heard about. I have now joined the Yeovil indoor flying club, a group who build balsa, tissue and rubber band airplanes from a kit, just like the ones from my school days, which, I suspect, might also be remembered by other people in my generation who built them as well. The main difference with the ones crafted by the club members is you can get them to fly. With careful set-up they can be made to takeoff, fly in a circle a few times, and then land. I must admit I'm still working on that.



In October we visited the second Yeovil model show of the year, but this time it seemed down on exhibitors and, depending on your interests, was not as interesting as the previous one.

In addition, we have made contact via the Somerton u3a with a man, who we have been told, has a shed full of models and so we will visit him in the next few weeks to find out more about his models and his expertise.

Just for fun, two of us have just started to fly helicopters; well at least small radio-controlled ones that can fly in the living room. After damaging the paintwork in mine, we went to the cricket field for further tests and set up. While there was no wind it was great fun and we made progress, but in more windy circumstances the helicopters were difficult to handle and crashed a lot. We are looking forward to our next outing. If this interests you please do get in touch.

If you would like to join or just meet up for a chat with the Martock u3a Modelling Group, please contact Tony Carter:

07966644260. cartertony717@gmail.com

Birthdays:

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

Sue Roberts, Gloria Graham, Lynne Stephens! Wendy Mullings

New Members:

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

Barnaby Tolhurst, Emma Grayson, Helen Ibbotson

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.

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