

From the Acting Chair, Chris Atkins:

We are midway through February and all around us signs of new life are already emerging. I have never seen as many frogs and spawn in previous years as currently. Primroses are out and of course the brave little snowdrops. Snowdrop walks have become very popular and our u3a Garden Group organised a very successful meander to admire them in the Shaftesbury Snowdrop Festival on 17 February.

Our u3a continues to thrive and our numbers increase. The talk by the Patient Participation group was well attended and created a lot of discussion. We hope that you will enjoy our next monthly meeting with Richard Kay talking on 'Much More than Merely Matchstick Men' and as you may surmise is concerned with the life of L.S Lowry. Richard always brings his talks to life and its not to be missed if you can possibly help it.

New groups are being formed. We have a facilitator for a group interested in listening to recorded music sessions, so please contact Groups Secretary Mary Marshall if you would like more information. We are always very keen to hear suggestions for new groups, so please contact me or Mary. If you have always wanted to investigate a topic, tell us and we will endeavour to set up a group to help. I also would ask for anyone who would like to write a piece for the newsletter to contact me.

There is also a Special General Meeting during the March meeting, which sounds more onerous than it really is. It just means that during the excellent tea and cake break, if you are happy for me to officially become chair of Martock & District u3a then I need to be voted in.

March Meeting on Wednesday 13 March, 2.15 for 2.30 start

**Richard Kay — 'Much More than Merely Matchstick Men,
The Profound Art of L S Lowry'**

(See page 3 for an introduction to Richard Kay)

Followed by a short Special General Meeting (during the tea break) to give members the opportunity to confirm Chris Atkins as Chair

Future Meetings currently arranged

10 April — Ian Munro 'Impressions of Berlin in 1963, photos and first hand experiences'

8 May — Caroline Brown, Retired Psychologist and Lecturer 'Our Divided Brain, insight into the way our brains work'

12 June — Joe Bleasdale 'Keep Bees Without Fuss or Chemicals. 45 years of experience beekeeping in Hampshire and Somerset'

10 July — Claire Wainwright, Cancer Research UK 'Breast and Prostate Cancer'

11 September — Fergus Dowding 'The History of Martock'

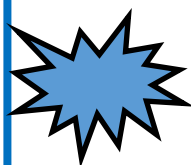
9 October — Greg Atkins 'How To Catch Flu'



Welcome to our new members:

Caroline and John Woodhead, Ann and Haydn Everitt, Newton Jones and Marilyn Butler.

We look forward to speaking to you at a meeting, please make yourself known to a committee member when you attend.



Celebration Corner

Happy Birthday to:

Janet Shorey, Ruby Helyer, Angela Hunt Cooke, Carol Youngson, Rosalyn Bowers, Sheila Young, Eileen Cripps, Meryl Townsend, Rosanne Crowther, Beth Hill and Adrian Sutton (70th).

If you would like your name mentioned, please let the Membership Secretary know your birth month if you haven't done so already (phone 07555 033027 or email martocku3amembership@gmail.com) Do you have a special birthday or anniversary coming up? Please let the Membership Secretary know so we can give you good wishes.

Dates for Your March Diary

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|---------------------------|--|
| Saturday 9 March | 10.00am-1.00pm, Moorlands Shopping Centre, Martock — Farmer's Market |
| 11-17 March | National 'The Big Plastic Count', go to https://thebigplasticcount.com/ if you are interested |
| Wednesday 13 March | 2.15pm for 2.30pm start, Martock Parish Hall — Martock & District u3a monthly meeting |
| Friday 15 March | Meet at 9.30am, Moorlands Shopping Centre — Martock Health Walk |
| Saturday 23 March | Garden Group visit to The Hardy Plant Society Spring Plant Fair — For more information contact Elizabeth Kirtley on eak1208@yahoo.co.uk |
| Friday 22 March | 10.00am-12.00pm, Martock Parish Hall — Come 4 Coffee |
| Saturday 30 March | 7.00pm for 7.30pm start, Martock Parish Hall — Film Night, film to be confirmed |
| Sunday 31 March | Remember, the clocks go forward at 2am — make sure you don't miss something important! |

Introducing your Committee members

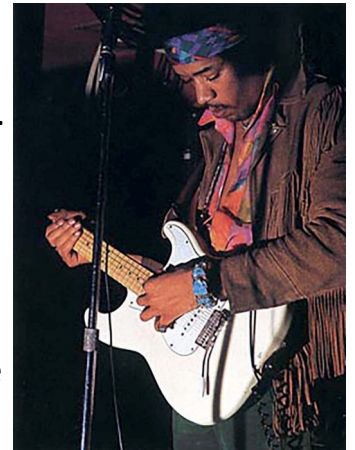
Hi, I'm Sue Roberts, Treasurer of Martock & District u3a. I've been a member for a few years now. I moved to Martock in 2016 and joined the u3a soon after, although I didn't join any groups for sometime. I don't know why that was, but it just took some time to get used to living in the village and getting to know some of you. Now that I have joined some groups, my life has become much more fun and I've made some lasting friends, for which I'm more than grateful. I belong to several groups; French Improvers, Lunch Club, Sewing Group, Modern Board Games Group and I have recently joined the Play Reading Group.

I've enjoyed my life so far and have done a fair amount of travelling, both in my career and for pleasure. I married in the 70's and had my daughter, Nicola, who's now unbelievably 50 years old; where did that go

to?! I'm very lucky indeed to be able to say that I'm now both a grandmother and great grandmother!

I'm from the Middlesex area of what's now known as West London. It was great to be living in West London at that time for many reasons but, for me, it was mostly because I had the chance to see some of the best musical bands of their generation – Jimi Hendrix, The Doors, Led Zeppelin, amongst others. I still make time to go and see bands to this day; the excitement of doing so has never left me.

Joining the Martock & District u3a has undoubtedly been one of best decisions I've ever made!



An Introduction to Richard Kay

— the speaker at the meeting on 13 March

Following a degree in the History of Art at the University of St. Andrews, Richard began his career at Sothebys in 1987. He worked in their salerooms in Chester, Sussex and London for nearly nine years. Richard joined Lawrences in 1999, having previously been an Associate Director at Phillips Auctioneers where he oversaw picture sales and valuations for the firm in Central Southern England.

Since joining Lawrences, Richard has achieved great successes with works by artists as varied as John Atkinson Grimshaw, Winifred Nicholson (for whom Lawrences held the world record auction price for almost a decade), William Heath Robinson, Paul Sandby and Joseph Farquharson. He carefully researched an oil painting by John William Godward that was bought for £380,000. A superb group of six linocuts from the Grosvenor School achieved record prices to total £166,000.

Richard is a regular lecturer, devising over two dozen talks on themes as varied as Mona Lisa and Minimalism and also speaking to local art groups, Somerset County Museum, The Arts Society and Sothebys Institute of Art amongst many others.

On 13 March, Richard will be talking to us about JS Lowry.



Martock & District Accounts Update

We started the month with a balance from January of £1,929.92 in the general account. We received £273.72 in subscriptions and spent £98.27 on various expenses. These were: stationery £40.07, monthly webhost fee of £20.70, and £37.50 on the Valentine's Day chocolates which were available at the monthly meeting. The balance after these transactions was £2,105.36 in the General Account.

Our Social Account had £62.00 added to it, giving a February total of £712.66. Added together, our two accounts have funds totalling £2,818.02. The accounts are always available for inspection and if any members have any questions about how the accounts are managed, please feel free to contact the Treasurer, Sue Roberts. Her email address is treasmaru3@gmail.com.

The raffle at the February monthly meeting raised £42. This was donated by the speaker to Martock Youth Club.

Martock & District Groups Update

If you wish to be or are a member of a Martock & District Group, **please note the following:**

1. To comply with the u3a Insurance Policy which covers Martock & District u3a, all members must be allocated to a Group by the Groups Secretary. Please do not approach a Group Leader directly; and
2. The u3a insurance does not provide personal accident cover and physically active group activities are undertaken at members' own risk.

Central u3a Update

The central u3a sends out a monthly Newsletter by email to all u3a members who are registered to receive it. This is separate from the quarterly Third Age Trust Magazine.

If you would like to receive the Newsletter, please go to <https://www.u3a.org.uk/news/newsletter> and sign up with your email address.

Did you read the article on page 29 of the February u3a magazine, Third Age Matters (the quarterly Third Age Trust Magazine)?

It was about a 73 year old qualified personal trainer, a u3a member who ran exercise classes for her group and then went online during the pandemic. She has now put the free classes on YouTube, three a week, lasting 20 minutes each. Search YouTube for Rosemary Mallace Strong After Sixty.

I think they are brilliant and have enjoyed exercising in my living room at any time that suits me. At 82 I am well aware that I have reached the 'Use It or Lose It' stage and want to preserve flexibility and stamina for as long as I can.

I love Rosemary because she is an older lady not some strapping gorgeous gym bunny. She even says "Oof" during some of the exercises. She is one of us! Give it a go. Rosemary Mallace Strong After Sixty.

Alison Bleasdale

Helpful Hints

Slinky Bus for Martock, South Petherton, Crewkerne, Chard, Ilminster, Langport & Somerton

Slinky is a demand responsive transport service funded by Somerset County Council for people without access to or unable to access conventional transport. The vehicles are all accessible and can be used for reasons such as getting to local health appointments or exercise classes, visiting friends and relatives, going shopping or social reasons. You can also use it as a link to forms of public transport .

You will be eligible to use the Slinky bus if you:

- Do not have your own transport
- Do not have access to a public bus service
- Or if you have a disability which means you cannot access a public bus

Eligible passengers could include parents with young children, teenagers, students, the elderly, the retired and people with disabilities. If you are eligible, you must complete a registration form before using the service for the first time.

Services available: Monday to Friday: 8am to 5pm

Booking number: 0844 800 9646

Booking lines are open: Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm

Please phone the booking office to check the cost of the journey. Holders of a Somerset issued English National Concessionary Pass and children aged between 5 - 16 will be entitled to 50% reductions in the cost of the fare. Children under 5 travel free.



with handbells.

Shortly after this I met Jenny Becker who had started a small group ringing a set of Martock bells that had been recovered from the church when the tower bells were being refurbished. Martock 'Belles' was eventually born, with 7 regular ringers, and for several years we practised weekly, (only missing rehearsals on pain of death). We performed concerts in care homes, WI and MU meetings, fêtes & fairs and attended rallies with 50 or so other ringers from the region which were great fun. Time moves on and we have been struggling to keep our team together. We did manage to keep going during Covid, bending the rules slightly as we were able to ring at our oldest (96) member's house. She has 2 walls of foldback windows and with these fully open and with hats, scarves, gloves, jackets and masks we felt we ringing outside/inside! Two members of our team also ring with the Souwesters, a group of about 30+ ringers from all over the southwest who meet monthly in Taunton. We learn different techniques and ring more challenging music covering 5 octaves with about 200 bells.

We have just performed a memorable concert in Bodmin with the Loveny Cornish male voice choir, a truly wonderful experience. A DVD recording should be available in due course. For me, life has gone full circle because the family who organise the Souwesters are the same people who I heard ringing in Montacute 30 years ago.

However, ringing regularly with a local team is paramount and we need more Belles or Beaux! Being able to read music is helpful but not essential, an enjoyment of making music and team commitment are more important.

We currently meet on Monday afternoons in Shepton Beachamp at 2.30pm for a couple of hours. This includes ringing, tea, cake and chat! Thursday afternoon is another possibility. If you are interested and would like to give it a try, please come and speak to me, I am usually manning the teapot at our u3a monthly meetings!

Have you got any useful hints, information or experiences you think members will be interested in? Please send your ideas to Chris Atkins.

From a member

Handbells by Mary Taylor

Almost 30 years ago I attended a magical handbell concert in Montacute church, where a group of ringers rang the most amazing variety of tunes on handbells.

Several years later, I was thrilled to discover a handbell ringing course at the WI college near Oxford. I had a wonderful couple of days being tutored by Bill Butler, one of THE people associated



Martock & District u3a 2023-24 Committee

Acting Chair – Chris Atkins martocku3achair24@gmail.com **Please note new email address**

Vice Chair –

Treasurer – Sue Roberts treasmaru3a@gmail.com

Secretary – Pat Brett commaru3a@gmail.com

Web Manager – Alison Bleasdale webmaru3a@gmail.com

Groups Secretary – Mary Marshall martocku3agroupssec1@gmail.com

Membership Secretary – Alison Sutton martocku3amembership@gmail.com or for information about membership please ring 07555 033027

Publicity & Events Secretary – Adrian Sutton pubmaru3a@gmail.com

Committee Member – Carol Youngson comm4maru3a@gmail.com

Committee Member – Philip Booth comm5maru3a@gmail.com

The Committee welcomes feedback from members, by email to the Acting Chair or the Secretary or through your Group Leader

March Facts and Legends ...

The name March is ultimately derived from the Latin word Martius (named after Mars, the Roman god of war). Martius was the name of the first month in the original Roman calendar. Along with January, May, and June, March is one of several months named after a god.

Why is Mars named after the god of war? The Romans knew of seven bright objects in the sky: the Sun, the Moon, and the five brightest planets. They named them after their most important gods. The Romans were great soldiers and thought Mars, the god of war, was very important, Mars, the red planet, was named after this god.



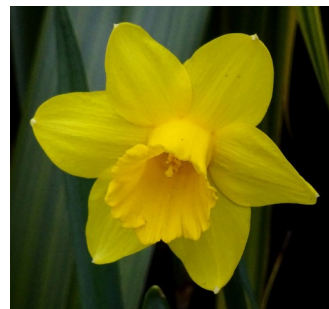
The birthstone of March is aquamarine, a blue-green gemstone that is typically connected with the ocean and is supposed to represent youth, health, and hope.

Spring begins in March in the Northern Hemisphere. The equinox, which happens around 20 or 21 March in the Northern Hemisphere, marks the formal start of spring. It occurs when the sun is directly over the equator and day and night

are nearly equal in length. In the Southern Hemisphere, March is the start of Autumn.

March is generally linked with high winds, and the old proverb “March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb” describes the month’s weather patterns. This proverb has been around for a long time and while it is not necessarily accurate, it captures the idea that March is a month of transition and change, with a mix of winter and spring weather patterns.

Daffodils and jonquils (a daffodil variant) are the birth flowers of March. Daffodils represent regard or unrequited love, rebirth and new beginnings. One of the purest manifestations of love is the presentation of a daffodil.



Jonquils also symbolise desire and friendship. These flowers are attached to compassionate, dreamy, independent and loving personality traits.

