

From the Chair, Chris Atkins:

Our November meeting attracted an exceptionally large audience for the talk on Cecil Sharp given by David Sutcliffe. It was a fascinating insight and who amongst us knew that all those years ago Sharp collected a song from a Martock gardener named Walter Locock? It would be so interesting to find out more and I wonder if there are any descendants still living in the village.

We started our collection of food for The George Transforming Lives Christmas food bank at that meeting. I can honestly say that the whole committee were astounded by your generosity, and I cannot thank you all enough for this. We have together already made a substantial collection for the appeal.

Our December meeting is of course our Christmas party. I hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend. There will be free mulled wine, soft drinks and mince pies to add to the festive spirit. It should be fun with a Christmas Raffle, Table Quiz and of course Entertainment. It is the last chance to donate to the food bank. If you would like to do so the box will be inside the door as it was last time.

As always, I am looking for possible new group suggestions. The committee would also love to welcome a member who has experience in organising trips/events to our team. If you think you would enjoy helping us to offer more excursions, then please contact me.

It is an honour to be Chair of this amazing branch of u3a and I could not do it without such a great committee. All of us want to join together to wish all of you much joy and of course,

A Very Merry Christmas.

December Meeting on Wednesday 11 December, 2.15 for 2.30 start

Christmas Party with entertainment from Witty Ditties

(See page 3 for information about Witty Ditties & about parking)

Future Meetings currently arranged

8 January 2025 — Brimsmore Garden Centre 'Gardening Folklore'

12 February — Caroline Newark 'Obsession, Betrayal & Revenge: a medieval murder mystery about the death of Edward II in Berkely Castle'

12 March — Richard Kay 'From Here to the Horizon: Landscape Painting from 1500 to the present day'

9 April — Ann French 'Forty Years On: A Career in Textile Conservation'

14 May — Richard Salter 'A Potted History of Quakers in England'



Please contact the Publicity & Events Secretary if you have ideas for Speakers



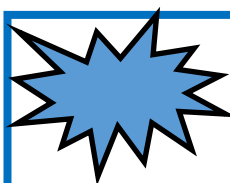
Welcome to our new members:

Helen Artingstall-Harris, Barbara Summers, Sally Oberthur, Sean McCormick

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

The George Coffee Shop, Martock

Wednesday 9am — 1.30pm;
Thursday and Friday 10am — 4.30pm;
Saturday 9.30am — 1pm



Celebration Corner
Happy Birthday to:

Lynne Stephens, Gloria Graham, Sue Roberts, Christopher Mitchell, Jane Emmerson, John Alexander, Mal Nelson Hedge, Christine Page

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 us know so we can give you good wishes.

Dates for Your December Diary

- Tuesday 10 December** Meet at 10.30am, Martock Recreation Ground — Martock Health Walk (1 mile round recreation ground at gentle pace)
- Wednesday 11 December** 2.15pm for 2.30pm start, Martock Parish Hall — Martock & District u3a monthly meeting
- Saturday 14 December** 10.00am-1.00pm, Moorlands Shopping Centre, Martock — Farmer's Market
- Saturday 14 December** 4.00-6.00pm, Moorlands Shopping Centre, Martock — Christmas Market

Information following the November meeting on Cecil Sharp

The speaker mentioned 2 specific websites:

www.cecilsharpspeople.org.uk — for information on all the musicians Cecil Sharp met
www.efdss.org/vwml-digitised-resources—for Cecil Sharp's Appalachian Diaries and photos of singers & dancers he met in south-west England and the USA

**An Introduction to Greg Beedle
who will entertain us at the Christmas Party on 11 December**

Greg lives in Montacute. He has performed his one man show — 'Witty Ditties (a celebration of the comic song)' — for many years. He never takes a fee and only ever performs to raise money for good causes. He has performed at many venues around Somerset and beyond.

Witty Ditties will entertain us with songs from performers such as Flanders and Swann, Jake Thackray, Victoria Wood, Richard Stilgoe and others.

**Merry Martock addresses isolation and loneliness over the festive period.
With the support of Martock Parish Council and a wonderful team of
volunteers, Merry Martock aims to bring residents together for a hot lunch &
shared companionship, in a warm and welcoming environment.**

Open to Martock Parish residents only.

MERRY MARTOCK, Monday 30th December, 12-2.30

Hot festive meal & good company!

**To book your place or to find out more, please contact
Caroline Bennett (Martock Community Team) on**

07946 121612 or

caroline.bennett@martock-pc.gov.uk

Limited numbers and transport available



The Chard and Ilminster U3A Rock Music Group is trundling along as it is very early days but we need some more members, we are looking for a keyboard player, drummer, lead guitarist who can "jam" and a male singer with a strong voice.

We meet at Horton Village Hall every other Wednesday 7pm - 9pm. If you are interested please reply by email to sueplawton@btinternet.com and we will get back to you. Thank you. Alan Lawton

Parking in The George Car Park for u3a Monthly Meetings

**We are allowed to use this carpark without charge for most meetings. But please put your
u3a Membership Card on your dashboard when parking for these meetings.**

Please car share as much as possible as there is limited space in the car park.

Thank you.

Martock & District Accounts Update

The final figures October 2024 show Income of £379.20, Expenditure of £46.80 with a total balance of £2,490.32. Please email the Treasurer on treasmaru3@gmail.com if you would like more detail about the accounts.

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.

If you wish to join or leave a Group, please contact the Groups Secretary, see back page for details. To ensure the insurance cover is valid, **all Group membership actions must be undertaken this way and not directly with a Group Leader.** Thank you.

If you are a Group Leader and would like to promote your Group in the Newsletter, please contact the Chair.

u3a Interest Groups Online

As a member of Martock & District u3a you can access online learning through the main u3a website — go to www.u3a.org.uk/learning/interest-groups-online/interest-groups-online-groups **39 groups from 3D printing at home to Zentangle Club via Archaeology, Climate Matters, Family History, Jazz, Law, Latin, Maths, Railways, Shakespeare and many other subjects!**

Interest Groups Online offers a variety of peer led, online learning opportunities for its subscribers. As part of the u3a movement, members generously volunteer their time and share their knowledge, skills and experience with the members in their groups. Some groups are more interactive than others, with an expectation that all members take it in turns to present their knowledge. If in doubt, give it a go. The more groups you try, the more likely you'll find the one you love. To join a group, you must first be a paid member of Interest Groups Online. Annual membership is £12, covering the period from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025. If you join after 1st October, the fee is reduced to £6.

Friends Extra — Your Exclusive Benefits Hub

**Subscribe to the u3a Friends Newsletter today at u3a.org.uk/newsletter
Once you subscribe, follow the link to join the Friends Extra Scheme
Unlock exclusive benefits & save money on shopping, travel, health, home, insurance & much more**

Martock & District u3a Theatre Group

Would you like to come and see Mary Beard at Westlands at 7.30 on Wednesday 8 October with a pre-show supper at Westlands Lounge Bar? Tickets are £38.50.

This show is an extremely long way ahead but if we do not book now, we will be unable to get reasonable seats. Mary's nationwide tour has been announced and half the seats are booked up already. Eight of us have already booked and I know that for a popular event like this, I'm sure I would find a taker for my ticket if I were unable to come at the last minute.

Step into the world of Ancient Rome with renowned historian Mary Beard as she uncovers the stories that history forgot. In this captivating live event, Mary Beard takes you beyond the well-worn paths of emperors and battles, revealing the rich and complex lives of those often left out of the history books. From the gritty reality of a gladiator's life in the arena to the tumultuous final days of the Roman Republic, Mary rewrites popular narratives, casting fresh light on what we think we know. With the release of Gladiator 2 in 2024, there's never been a better time to dive deeper into the world of Ancient Rome's most iconic figures. But this isn't just about the past — Mary draws thought-provoking connections between Roman politics and today's world. What can we learn from the rise and fall of the Roman Republic, and how might it resonate with the political landscapes we navigate today? Don't miss the chance to ask your own questions as Mary Beard unpacks the history that shaped one of the greatest empires of all time.

Whether you're a history enthusiast or a curious newcomer, this evening promises to be a spectacular journey through time, leaving you with fresh insights into both ancient and modern worlds.

If you are interested, please email Alison Bleasdale on alisonrbleasdale@gmail.com

Perhaps you would consider joining the Theatre Group, so you get information about future visits.

If so please contact the Groups Secretary.

Normally our visits are not planned so far ahead but this show will be sold out a long time beforehand.

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



Martock Food Bank — Christmas 2024

As a 'thankyou' for the use of The George car park for our monthly meetings, we will be collecting food and other items to donate to the Martock Food Bank for the Christmas boxes that are given to those in need of help locally.



Please bring your donations of Christmas tinned or boxed food, other household items and items from a chemist (all very important for people) to the monthly meetings on 13 November or 11 December.



If you wish to donate perishable items, please bring them to the December meeting only.

Please ensure all items have an expiry date for after Christmas and preferably into 2025, so that people can properly benefit from your generosity. Many thanks.



Martock & District u3a 2023-24 Committee

Chair – Chris Atkins martocku3achair24@gmail.com

Vice Chair – Stewart Seery

Treasurer – Sue Roberts treasmaru3@gmail.com

Secretary – Pat Brett commaru3a@gmail.com

Web Manager – Alison Bleasdale webmaru3a@gmail.com

Groups Secretary – Felicity Renshaw 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

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

DISCLAIMER:

The Committee reserves the right to edit submissions, if required.

December Facts and Legends ...

December's name derives from the Latin word 'decem' (meaning ten) because it was originally the tenth month of the year in the calendar of Romulus c. 750 BC, which began in March. The Anglo-Saxons called it Winter Monath or Yule Monath (because of the custom of a burning yule log around this time).

The December flowers are holly and narcissus, particularly the paper-white variety. Poinsettia is the



Christmas plant for many people. The birthstones for December are



tanzanite, zircon, turquoise, and blue topaz — each known for their stunning blue hues that offer distinct shades of colour.

6 December is the feast day of St Nicholas, who is the patron saint of children. In the Netherlands and other European countries, St Nicholas is said to bring sweets and presents to well-behaved children on this day. Dutch settlers took this tradition to the USA and St Nicholas evolved into Santa Claus delivering presents on Christmas Eve night. This idea then returned across the Atlantic and merged with the British tradition of Father Christmas.

In Roman times, 17 December was the beginning of the Saturnalia festival. Seven days of feasting and merrymaking in honour of the god of agriculture,

when slaves were waited on by their masters. Presents were given, informal clothes worn and gambling games were permitted. A master of the revels was appointed, who was later seen in medieval England as the Lord of Misrule who presided over Christmas celebrations.

Other December events include:

- 1 December 1990 saw British and French workers meeting under the English Channel and the Channel Tunnel was officially opened in May 1994.
- British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan opened the first motorway, the Preston bypass, now part of the M6.
- The annual presentation of the Nobel Prizes is on 10 December.
- 17 December 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright made the first powered aeroplane flight.
- On 21 December 1937 the first full length animated cartoon was premiered, 'Snow White and the seven Dwarfs'.
- 'Silent night, holy night' was first sung on 24 December 1818. The words by young priest Joseph Franz Mohr, the music by Herr Gruber in Austria.
- 26 December, Boxing Day, refers to the tradition of wealthy people giving 'boxes' and a day off to people who worked for them during the year.
- St Thomas à Beckett was martyred in Canterbury Cathedral on 29 December 1170.