

Welcome

Hello again, most of the holidays are over and things are getting quieter. I was able to be in Devon during August when I attended the groups display. It was a good opportunity to meet several group leaders and members of our u3a. I stayed around Sidmouth to attend the 'Drink & Chat' group in the early evening. The Leaders Marian and Kate have got a good format going, giving us the opportunity to have interesting discussions as well as meet new people. It provides a welcome evening out once a month and I expect it will attract more members as it gets more widely known through word of mouth. I shall certainly be returning if I am around that time of the month.



There is plenty of new information in this newsletter including details of last month's meeting and several other events as well as a couple of new columns which I hope will be of interest. Best wishes, **Brian Webb** - newslettereditor@sidmouthu3a.org

Chairman's Message

I hope everyone has had a good summer whatever you have been doing. Many groups have taken some time off but now it's time to get active again and we have some new groups which you can read about in the groups section.

Sidmouth u3a is now live on Beacon. This is our centralised management system which will help us to keep all of your personal information safe. Over the next few months training will be made available for all of our group leaders and everyone who needs to use the system. Many thanks to Chris Powell who is our system administrator and who has done the vast majority of the work getting us up and running so quickly and painlessly. Also, a very warm welcome to Chris onto the committee. We now have a few more people coming onto the committee and we still need more help to keep Sidmouth u3a running well. This is your organisation which is run for the members by the members. We currently need a Secretary, or two, in which case the role can be split. Plus a vice chair, and another groups coordinator. Please get in touch if you would like to help. Usually when I say this I hear from no-one, please make this month different and get in touch if you would like to help.

I'm looking forward to meeting our new members at the next new member's meeting on 21st September, along with some of our group leaders.

Have a look at the social section to find out about the social events in the autumn. In the next issue of the newsletter will be the details of the planned trip to France next year.

Lastly, please encourage all of the members you know to read the newsletter as 200 of our members don't open it at all and we would like to get this information to everyone.

Best wishes Janet Bailey chairman@sidmouthu3a.org.

Forthcoming Events

Tuesday September 12th Meeting, Stowford Rise Community Centre from 1.30–3.30pm. Refreshments served until 2pm.

life as a television programme maker is full of surprises with Alex Leger



Alex has been a TV producer, Director and cameraman working on the front line of programme production from 1975-2011. He filmed the horrors of the 1985 Ethiopian famine, a volcanic eruption, and climbed Kilimanjaro, amongst many other fascinating things. He was also the longest serving producer on Blue Peter.

In his talks he tells stories -all absolutely true- to show how life as a television programme maker is full of surprises. Over 36 years he has witnessed at first hand how the BBC changed as technology

forced it along different paths. His talk is illustrated with film and video clips and enriched with many 'behind the scenes' anecdotes. Alex has had an immensely varied life. He went to school in Exeter, and started public speaking in 2012 with engagements in national conferences, cruise ships and numerous local groups. We are pleased to welcome him to Sidmouth

Notes on the August Open Meeting

The Meeting on 15 August was very well attended, with 26 groups represented. Most groups attracted interest from potential new group members, and these included our new *Remarkable Women* group with a promising number of sign-ups. Of particular note was the *Find Your Voice* singing group which attracted no fewer than ten new members. Attendees also proposed new groups (Mandarin or Italian, anyone?) and the leader of the Ottery u3a Handbell Ringers group suggested teaming up with the Sidmouth Recorder group for a joint session. We also have an offer to run a new German Conversation group, as the existing one has no vacancies and there is further interest among the membership – more news on that soon. All in all, a very productive and satisfying afternoon.

If you are interested in starting a new group, please contact Groups Coordinator Amanda Haste at groupsmz@sidmouthu3a.org for a chat.

Social Events

Drink and Chat at The Balfour Arms

This is now held on the 3rd Tuesday in the month from 7 – 9 pm on the following dates:-

19th September and 17th October. It's a very friendly chatty group who would welcome any new members especially if new to u3a. Just come along, no need to book.

Skittles. 29th September.

Our next skittles morning will be at the Blue Ball again. Meet at 10.45 for 11a.m. start. The cost is £2 per person. Contact Judy,

Theatre trip to The Mousetrap. 13th September

Agatha Christie's Mousetrap is at The Princess Theatre in Torquay on **Wednesday 13th September**. Our trip will be for the matinee performance at 2.30p.m. The coach will leave at approx. 11.30a.m. and get to Torquay to allow plenty of time for you to enjoy lunch at one of the many pubs or restaurants close to the theatre. The cost will be in the region of £35-£40. Contact - Jackie o

Galactic Soundtrack. 3rd November

This is the next Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra concert at The Great Hall in Exeter on **Friday 3rd November 2023**. The coach will leave The Triangle at Sidmouth around 5pm with pick up points around town and in Newton Poppleford. There will be a two course meal at the venue before the performance. The cost is currently being calculated. Contact Marian

Theatre trip to 'Six the Musical'. 17th November

Friday 17th November 2023. This evening performance will start at 6pm. and is one act with no interval. The coach will leave early enough for a meal before the show and will return after the performance, getting us back much earlier than usual for an evening performance. Contact - Jackie

Pickleball taster later in the year. Watch this space for details.

Groups Galore

NEW Discussion group:- This House believes! (Zoom only)

This new group will be modelled on the Oxford Union Debating Society. The group will have an opportunity to debate current and ethical issues with the meeting ending with a vote of members, after hearing the debate between those for and against "what this house believes". Our time together will be via Zoom, which will not only accommodate a larger number than an in-person venue, but will also make for more authentic voting and questions. For more details, please contact Stephen Low

Groups with vacancies.

Please contact the group leader to find out more details. The full groups list is sent out with this newsletter. [Full details can be found here or on the link on the newsletter email.](#)

Out and about with your Newsletter Editor:-



During our stay in Devon during August, we caught wind of a potential church concert on a Saturday afternoon. Despite the overcast weather, we took precautions against rain and set out from Seaton, making our way along the cliffs to Beer. Instead of descending the steps, we veered right, inland, and descended a steep hill adjacent to the Parish Church. Finding nothing of interest there, we headed down toward the beach. About 150 yards further, we stumbled upon the Congregational Church, where an "Organ concert" was taking place. Curious, we paid the entrance fee with uncertain expectations. Upon entering, we were greeted by a magnificent 99-year-old Wurlitzer Organ, the oldest of its kind in Britain. These organs were originally developed in the 1920s to accompany silent films. Despite their eventual obsolescence, they continued to resonate in many cinemas until the early 1960s.

Some of us, as members of the older u3a generation, can recall these organs playing during Saturday morning picture shows. Also notably, Reginald Dixon at the Blackpool Tower ballroom, a regular on the BBC Light Programme, stands out in one's memories. The organist treated us to melodies spanning from the 1920s to the 1960s, intertwined with discussions about the instrument's history throughout that era. During the intermission, we had the opportunity to converse with the organist and the dedicated group of volunteers responsible for maintaining the organ. The afternoon proved to be both delightful and enlightening. As we made our way home, the weather markedly improved, climbing the steps out of Beer, we pondered why this unique piece of heritage wasn't more prominently showcased. A monthly tradition, these concerts attract organists from across the UK, all eager to play this beautifully aged instrument.

With the tourist crowds gone and convenient parking available, it offers a distinctive outing on a dreary autumn day. Upcoming concerts are on September 9th, October 14th, November 11th, and December 9th. The repertoire seems to be a bit potluck, leaving me yearning to hear some lively Bach music resonating within that setting. Brian Webb.

Tech Corner with Tony Warren

This is a new column that I have volunteered to write each month, just to give a few tips and ideas about computer security, staying safe on-line and making sure nobody gets caught out by the bad people out there. I was pleased to be able to present a talk on this at the Science and Technology group, so if you are in the group, some of this will be familiar.

I thought I'd start off with three items, a nag about using passwords, tips on coming up with a safe one, and finally, some defences against scammers.

We recently saw that the Northern Ireland Police inadvertently provided a list of all their officers and staff on a "Freedom of Information" request, which quickly fell into the wrong hands. It happens all the time to so many organisations, but, annoyingly, people like us have no choice in the matter – it's those who should be keeping our stuff private that don't. So, the message is this. If you are keeping other people's personal information on your computer or tablet, perhaps a list of your group members or such like, please make sure it's password protected because, believe you me, hackers WILL try and get into your device. Without a password, you've simply left the porch door open!



Passwords. Don't we love 'em! I could go on and on, as is my way, but I won't.

Use AT LEAST 12 characters, a number or two, and upper and lower case letters. That will take a hacker 300 years to "brute force" (So my chart tells me). It's not that difficult – here's an easy to remember one just as an example (PLEASE don't use it!) – U3aReally3xcellent. That's 18 mixed cases, with numbers. My chart says it would take 11 trillion years to hack. That should do, and it's dead easy to remember! *It's not a PASSWORD, it's a PASSPHRASE.*

Finally, If you don't get anything else out of this column, this is the list you should burn on your memory for when you receive a TEXT, CALL or EMAIL

1. You HAVEN'T won anything – that is ALWAYS a scam.
2. You haven't missed a package that needs your details and a fee to pick up.
3. It is absolutely IMPOSSIBLE for anyone out there to detect that your computer or device has a technical problem which needs fixing. Don't believe them!
4. No bank will EVER ring you. If you think they did, then put your phone down (the caller might

keep it connected). Go to a DIFFERENT phone, look up the bank's number and ring them. Better still, just unplug or turn the phone off and forget it. If the bank had a problem, they would freeze your account and write a letter.

5. Never click links in an email unless you are absolutely certain it is from someone you know, and the links are genuine. Never ever click a link in a text message, be especially careful with a text. With a link be sure you are stone-cold certain it is from a friend or genuine company, such as EE or Octopus Energy etc.
6. If you want to check where an email came from, even though it looks genuine, click FORWARD EMAIL (but don't ACTUALLY forward it!). You will see the forwarded version which reveals the true email address it came from.
7. Artificial Intelligence models can now EXACTLY mimic the voice of a relative or friend. If someone calls you because they're in trouble and need money, ask them something that nobody else would know. Never trust anyone in this situation.
8. Always use two-factor authentication if it's offered.

That's it for today, however if you would like to read a full version of my talk then, click the link below.

[The presentation is for all levels of computer skills, most is for ordinary users , but a few pages will be of interest to the more advanced users.](#)

If you would like to suggest a topic for another edition please [click here to put your suggestion on this form](#)

TONY

Final Notes:

SEEKING A SECOND GROUPS COORDINATOR

With 58 groups (and counting) we are seeking another Groups Coordinator to share this important role. If you feel you have something to offer, and can thus make a valuable contribution to your Sidmouth u3a, please contact *Groups Coordinator Amanda Haste* at groupsmz@sidmouthu3a.org to discuss what's entailed.

SEEKING NEWS EDITOR BACKUP

Well done if you have read this far. I must thank everyone for their contributions this month, it makes for a varied newsletter. Not being local can be a problem for me and I am looking for someone to assist me. Some of you might say 'I don't have the technical skills'. Probably not true, if you can do emails and write a document on your device. [Click this link to a document outlining what the total job consists of. Not as scary as you might fear. Please read it and get back to me for a chat.](#)

Thanks, **Brian Webb** – newsletereditor@sidmouthu3a.org

Chairman:- Janet Bailey – chairman@sidmouthu3a.org
Vice Chairman:- (vacant)
Secretary:- Christina Isis – secretary@sidmouthu3a.org
Treasurer: Vera Arnold – treasurer@sidmouthu3a.org
Membership Secretary: Neil Morley – membership@sidmouthu3a.org
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Committee

Contact
Details