

SOMERTON U3A

LEARN, LAUGH, LIVE

January 2021

Newsletter 10



Happy New Year!

Chairman's Message

Dear Members

As you are reading this in January, I can only hope that your thoughts are about looking forward to 2021. What happened last year is over and behind us: we must now plan for the future, both at the moment with social distancing still in place and also when the time will come these restrictions are eventually lifted.

Somerton U3A committee have been actively making and discussing plans to for our wonderful Somerton U3A, when we will all be able to see one again face to face, meeting together in our interest groups and attending the monthly Friday meetings at the Edgar Hall.

The committee would like to celebrate the end of all social restrictions, when it happens, with one big event or possibly several smaller events, to relaunch Somerton U3A.

Some of the ideas discussed are shown here in the newsletter in the Projected Plan for Somerton U3A 2021 but we need to know what you would like to see happen.

Please take some time to look at the suggestions and chat to your friends to see what they would like.

What do you want to see and how can you help to make 2021 the most amazing year for Somerton U3A?

We need you to make it happen.

We need you NOW to ensure we have everything in place (optimistically) by Easter or maybe it will be June and beyond, it does not matter.

What does matter is that we start planning NOW . The coming year will bring challenges for many of us of course but IT'S TIME TO START PLANNING !

I hope the following ideas have whetted your appetite to join in and ensure that this will be the best of years for everyone.

Please contact Kay, our editor or myself with your ideas and thoughts.

I look forward to speaking with you and sharing your enthusiasm.

May I extend my sincerest thanks to you, our wonderful members, and wish you all a very happy new year!

Judi Powell

Chair SU3A

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Snowdrops



Cyclamen



Crocuses

Editor's Message

It is 9 months since we launched the Somerton U3A newsletter and what an opportune time to do it, just as the first social restrictions were put into place.

We have been able to give you regular updates on what the committee have been doing as well as up to date group news, many of whom have been able to meet, cleverly adapting to keep in line with ever-changing restrictions.

As I am writing this message, 4 days after Christmas, the short term situation is not looking good but we are all hoping that the roll out of the vaccine programme over the next few months will enable us to start meeting up again and resuming our normal activities, possibly in the late spring/early summer.

The committee would like to hold a special event to celebrate everyone being able to mix freely again.

The diagram below gives some of the ideas the committee have come up with but we want to hear your ideas as to the best way to re-launch Somerton U3A and celebrate the return of normality.

Also, we would like to thank all the people who sent in all the articles and photos for the 10 editions: we wouldn't have had a newsletter without you.

Please keep sending!

For those of you who would like to contribute but lack confidence in your literary skills, we are launching a new section in the newsletter – "Members' Corner" to which people can send very short items such as jokes, reminiscences, recipes, local history, photos or whatever takes your fancy.

Keep safe

Kay

PROJECTED PLAN FOR SOMERTON U3A 2021

Social restrictions Still in Place

- Help and support more groups to meet by Zoom
- Offer Zoom 1 to 1 training or group tutorials to help facilitate more groups meetings
- Increase monthly online events to twice a month
- Publicise national U3A online learning programmes and events
- Introduce other Zoom events such as coffee mornings, quizzes

Social Restrictions Eased

- Resumption of regular monthly meetings at the Edgar Hall
- Special event to celebrate end of social restrictions e.g. garden party, picnic, cream tea, a big walk.
- Ask members to share their ideas and preferences for such an event
- Celebrate National U3A Day, Wednesday 2nd June, 2021 with a range of activities in Somerton on that day
- Multi-media publicity campaign to raise public awareness of Somerton U3A to boost membership
- All day extended Enrolment Day with lunch and entertainment
- Active campaign to help the setting up of new interest groups and elimination of waiting lists

Forthcoming Events

Speaker Programme for Winter 2021.....on.....



Fri Jan 22nd - 11.00 am

Fishermans Tales - Kevin Little, a fishmonger for 50 years now a small holder, will share his animal tales

Friday 12th Feb 11.00 am

The Art of Trickery - Ian Keable, will talk about magicians depicted in paintings

Friday 26th Feb 11.00 am

Is anyone there? - Bob Mizon, talks about astronomy

Bob, a retired French teacher, used to inspire his pupils with his talks on the stars – all in perfect French!

Further details of speakers and their talks
can be found on the Somerton U3A website.
<https://u3asites.org.uk/somerton/events>

To a Snowdrop

Lone flower, hemmed in with snows and white as they
But hardier far, one more I see thee bend
Thy forehead, as if fearful to offend,
Like an unbidden guest. Though day by day,
Storms, sallying from the mountain-tops, waylay
The rising sun, and on the plains descend;

Yet art thou welcome, welcome as a friend
Whose zeal outruns his promise? Blue-eyed May
Shall soon behold this border thickly set
With bright jonquils, their odours lavishing
On the soft west-wind and his frolic peers;
Nor will I then my modest grace forget,
Chaste snowdrop, venturesome harbinger of Spring,
And pensive monitor of fleeting years.

William Wordsworth 1819



U3A Online Learning Events

The national U3A are offering a number of workshops, webinars and interactive sessions delivered by members for members, which are free to join.

For any blues fan there is *Pre-War Blues*, a four week course starting in January, *A Taste of Japan* for frustrated travellers and *The Unification of the British Isles: A Lesson in Geology*, *Van Gogh in Arles* as well as ongoing maths activities and games and cookery demonstrations.

Also available is the Winter School programme which is offering nine courses, each four to six weeks in length.

Subjects covered include creative writing, philosophy, law, gardening, Latin, recorders, poetry, crosswords and singing.

Please see the national U3aA for further details.

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/>

Groups News



Card Craft

In November we were baubling away making Baubles cards and in December the theme has been Christmas jumpers.

Here are some of our cards:

Amanda Hooper
group leader



Groups News



French group New Year message

Je suis très heureux á vous dire que notre group de francais a rencontré pour le premier temps depuis March 2020. Bien sûr ca n'etait pas dans la maison de quelque personne!!, mais sur le internet et Zoom.

Malheureusement nous avons besoin de acheter nos propres biscuits et café!!

C'etait un grand succès, et nous avons notre prochain reunion dans Janvier J'espere que vous avez un bonne année

David Robins



Recorder Group

How 2020 and Covid-19 has changed us.

In December 2019 the recorder group celebrated the end of the year with an elegant soirée at Barbara Jones's house along with her piano pupils.

We managed to meet through the summer in Naomi Powell's garden. That was fun once we had mastered the art of pegging down our music on windy days.

Inevitably we had to make changes as the colder weather arrived. We tried splitting into two smaller groups but then transferred to Zoom meetings.

And so you see us below, ready to start our Christmas concert 2020.

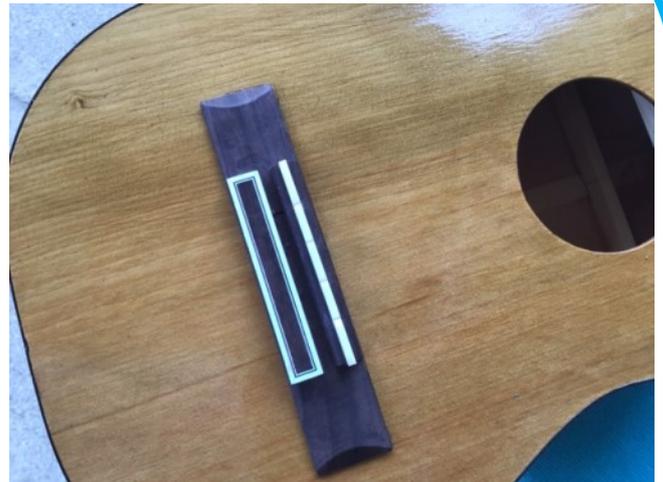
We spent a couple of happy hours playing carols.

Jane Redgrove



Uke build...final, part 4

....Haydn Callow



Nearly finished, time to glue the neck to the body, care is needed so the neck lines up and is at the correct level so the strings when fitted will be at the correct height. This is a baritone ukulele tuned GCEA with a low G saddle and bridge fitted. Also, the tuners, for a first attempt at a gloss finish, it's not bad but not up to professional standard. It sounds really nice and it took about 36 working hours to construct.



Starting Raised Garden Beds

Mike Davis



Growing fruits and vegetables free of contaminants in an elevated area is good for your back, health, appetite, and the environment.



These suggestions will help you succeed in starting an organic raised garden bed

Building raised beds: getting started

Although raised beds can be built at any time, most gardeners find it convenient to build them in winter, as long as the soil is not too wet or frozen. Where winter waterlogging is a problem, build raised beds in late summer. When building raised beds, the following points need to be considered:

- Firstly, define how big your raised bed needs to be, and where you need it
- Walking or stepping on raised beds is best avoided, so go for widths of less than 1.5m to allow access from the sides
- Avoid long runs of beds so that people are not tempted to step on them to get to the other side
- Pathways should be wide enough to wheel a barrow or accommodate special needs such as wheelchairs; 30cm (1ft) is the minimum width for walking and 60cm (24in) the minimum width for wheelbarrows
- Consider the materials: timber is cheap, but even when treated is the least long-lasting; sleepers are long-lasting but costly, bulky and difficult to cut; masonry (for example, brick, stone or Paving slabs) is costly but permanent. Alternatives include recycled plastic 'timber' lookalikes
- Small scale projects might be accomplished using a ready-made kit

Building raised beds: construction

- Clear the site of existing vegetation and level as required
- Mark out the beds with stakes and string, and check the levels
- For all but masonry walls, insert retaining stakes (5 x 5cm or 2 x 2in timber is suitable) at the corners and then at every 1.5m (5ft), sunk 30-45cm (12-18in) into the soil to support the sides
- Attach the sides to the retaining stakes with nails or screws (screws are better for avoiding splitting)
- For masonry walls, any wall higher than 20cm (8in) should be laid on concrete footings on 15cm (6in) deep hardcore foundations, and should be bonded with mortar. Footings should be approximately 15cm (6in) deep and 30cm (1ft) wide
- Where a masonry bed is to be built on a hard surface such as a patio, leave gaps at 45cm intervals between the joints in the first two courses to act as drainage holes. Cover these holes inside the wall with fine wire mesh, and heap gravel against the mesh when filling to help prevent clogging
- Sleepers and logs can be laid directly on level, firm soil. Fix into place by hammering metal rods into the ground through holes drilled vertically in each corner. Alternatively, use heavy-duty staples and wire
- Sink sawn logs or log rolls partially into the soil, and then ram them hard to keep the logs upright

Filling the bed

- Once the sides are in place, cultivate and enrich the underlying soil with organic matter
- Although raised beds constructed on free-draining soils require no drainage layer, on poorly-drained soils, or on a solid base such as concrete or paving, raised beds should have drainage material laid in the base. This should be above ground level, and consist of at least 8cm (3in) of coarse gravel, stones or hardcore, which should be covered with a geotextile membrane before filling with soil to prevent clogging up but omit the membrane if planting deep-rooted plants such as conifers, small trees or shrubs
- For beds deeper than 50cm (20in), remove the underlying topsoil (for use later in filling up the bed) and replace with subsoil, rubble or old inverted turves. Then replace the topsoil, enriched with organic matter (such as well rotted compost or manure) and fertiliser, firming in layers to prevent undue settling
- Once filled, allow beds to settle for two weeks before planting

10 points to ponder as 2021 begins.....

1. The dumbest thing I ever bought was a 2020 planner.
2. 2020: Stay away from negative people. 2021: Stay away from positive people.
3. The world has turned upside down. Old folks are sneaking out of the house & their "Children" are yelling at them to stay indoors!
4. This morning I saw a neighbour talking to her cat. It was obvious she thought her cat understood her. I went indoors & told my dog.... We had a good laugh.
5. Every few days try your jeans on, just to make sure they fit. Pyjamas will have you believe that all is well in the kingdom.
6. Does anyone know if we can take showers yet or should we just keep washing our hands?
7. I never thought the comment, "I wouldn't touch him/her with a 6-foot barge pole" would become a national policy, but here we are!
8. I need to practise social distancing from the refrigerator.

Raymond Jones



***Winter
flowering***



Please send all articles for the Newsletter to the editor kaywilliamson46@hotmail.com

Deadline for the February edition...20th January

No entries can be accepted after this date.

Pictures welcome, but keep script brief

Minimum formatting please...**no pdfs!**

Web site:<https://u3asites.org.uk/somerton/home>