

SOMERTON u3a

Newsletter 18 September 2021



The Meaning of September

September (from Latin *septem*, "seven"), was originally the seventh of ten months in the oldest known calendar devised by the Romans. After the calendar reform when January and February were added, September still kept its name.

September birth stone: sapphire

September flower: forget-me-not, morning glory, aster

Chairman's Message

Dear members,

I am writing this as the rain is making a devil of a noise against my windows. Has anyone mentioned to Carol Kirkwood (BBC Weather Presenter) that this is August and the height of our summer?

I will let you know how my holiday to Inverness goes, a long drive but we look forward to the SUNSHINE- oh yes we do!

Well, let's hope the weather improves for September as Somerton u3a future activities get underway. We have lots planned for new members, group leaders, the committee meetings and ALL members.

New groups are in the pipeline and we really want to hear from you with YOUR ideas. We can help with advice and in some circumstances we can offer financial assistance. We have future get-togethers planned at the Edgar Hall and a possible autumn social event, obviously subject to any prevailing guidelines.

Always remember the u3a is run by the members for the members.

Please read on to find the dates for your diary and the group activities.

I feel very confident that the months ahead will be happy ones.

Your u3a offers wonderful prospects and we can all offer so much to each other.

So as they say north of the border,

*Lang Mae Yer Lum Reek !
I wish you a long and healthy life,*

Judi



Poem by Mary B. C. Slade

I come! I come! and the
waving field

Its wealth of golden grain
shall yield.

In the hush and heat of
glowing noon,

The insects' hum is the
only tune;

For the merriest birds
forget to sing,

And sit in the shade with
drooping wing.



U3A Enrolment 2021/22

Existing Members

As with last year, enrolment will not be carried out face to face.
Payment is by cheque made out to Somerton u3a, or by bank transfer:

Details available from Marilyn

Please give your name as a reference. Cash will not be accepted.

New Members

If you are applying for new membership there is a form available to download from the website.
Click on *Links*.

Change of Details

If any of your details have changed, there is a change of information form similarly available. **If you are already a member and none of your details have changed you do not need to complete another form.**

If you are unable to download a form for any reason one can be posted to you.

Cheques, and requests for forms if necessary, should be sent to:

**Marilyn Muffett
4, Meadow Close
Somerton
TA11 6AS**

You can also email Marilyn at membership@SomertonU3A.UK or call her on 01458 899773 to request a form.

All renewals should be accompanied by a stamped, addressed envelope for return of your membership card, which also acts as receipt for payment.

This applies to payment by bank transfer too.

Up to date information on groups preamble.

As there is no opportunity for group leaders to showcase what their groups do this year, as is usually the case at the annual Enrolment Day at the Edgar Hall, they have been asked to send in details for the newsletter and the website.

Members will be able to see, not only what groups are planning for the autumn and winter but also who are in a position to welcome new members.

A big thank you to all the group leaders who sent in details for this month's newsletter.

Any group leader whose group is not featured here or in last month's newsletter, it's not too late. If you send us some details, they will be included in the October newsletter.

Roast Potato Club

Roast Potato club has been meeting ever since we were allowed to meet in groups of six. We meet for lunch on the 3rd Sunday of each month. We got our name when we realized that each meal was judged by the quality of its roast potatoes.

Scrabble

The Scrabble group has been meeting since May. At present we are meeting in two separate houses for various reasons. It may be possible to welcome two or three new players in September. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Monday afternoons in Somerton and usually play two games with a tea break.

Garden Visits

The Garden Visits group has had a very busy summer. We have visited 7 beautiful gardens since the middle of June. It seems that meeting up with friends after so long in lovely settings was good for body and soul. There may be one more autumnal visit and then we will take a break until the snowdrops appear next year.

If you would like to join any of these groups, or would welcome help with forming your own group please contact Jane by email redgrove@btinternet.com

Jane Redgrove

Family History

I have provisionally booked the Bar Area at Edgar Hall for our meetings in September, October and November this year.

We meet on the 4th Monday at 2.00pm for 2 hours and we do have vacancies currently if anyone wants to join us - I am happy to be contacted by any interested people - my phone no is 07503 879621 and my email is - vwinterburn@hotmail.com

We don't meet in August and December normally as our meeting dates are too close to the normal Enrolment Day and the Christmas period.

I have yet to confirm this booking but there shouldn't be any problem.

Viv Winterburn

Art Group News

We will be starting back at the Parish Rooms on 7 September from 2.30pm. Our first afternoon together will be sorting out our travelling books (sketch books which travel from artist to artist consisting of a theme which each person illustrates to their own design), and deciding what we want to do in the next few months. We are a very democratic bunch of people!

It will be quite strange meeting up again, and sad too as we have lost a couple of our members since March 2020: Jean Francis and Beryl Bradnam. Perhaps not everyone will come back having found other things they would like to do, or maybe because they feel it is still risky to meet up indoors. On the latter point, we will be doing all we can to ensure everyone's safety. Our tables and chairs will be positioned to keep an

element of social distancing and we will respect everyone's feelings on the matter of face masks.

If you would like to join us for our fun sessions which are held on the first Tuesday afternoon of each month, please contact Denise on deecclarke2910@gmail.com.

Dee Clarke

Bird watching

Several members of the bird watching group chose to meet on an ad hoc basis when restrictions on outdoor socialising were lifted last summer and have continued to meet on a regular basis since then but have been restricted to local reserves.

Before Covid the programme was very varied with day trips to more distant destinations as well as the half day local visits. As the current visits are confined to the local reserves, numbers at present are very limited due to

the size of the hides.

As the situation hopefully keeps improving, the programme will gradually be extended and it may be possible to accept a small number of new members.

No prior knowledge is necessary but a firm commitment to attending the twice monthly meetings is desirable.

Kay Williamson

Sunday Gourmet Girls

This group started meeting for their monthly Sunday lunches in June at The Kingsdon Inn and in July we had our Sunday Roast at The Long Sutton Golf Club.

We meet on the 4th Sunday every month and are due to gather again this month - venue yet to be confirmed.

We have 10 members and so our group is full meaning we don't have any vacant slots for more to join us at present.

Craft Group

This was formed during lockdown after the leader of the popular Card Craft Group, Jean, died.

We are looking forward to our first monthly meeting all together, although we have kept in contact with monthly challenges of a card to make as well as collaborative projects (working individually at home) as well as sharing photos of other crafty projects by email.

shop.

We are virtually at full capacity due to the room size/ number of tables. However, if anyone else would like to join us, please contact Amanda via the Groups page and we'll see if anything else can be offered when numbers make it feasible.

When lockdown(s) have allowed, we have met for a chat in a member's lovely garden or a coffee

Amanda Hooper

Evening Reading Group

Past, Present and Future

Despite the challenges of the pandemic the Evening Readers are fortunate to have a raison d'être that has adapted well to meeting via Zoom. Whilst we have not managed to source all our books through Somerton library as usual, we decided to either buy, scrounge or download our chosen books and have met regularly each month. We all understand the limitations of Zoom but, as two of our members have moved from Somerton, it suited us well.

In addition to our normal practice of asking each member in turn to recommend a book, we have also revisited books from our childhood, reread a period detective novel and recently read or reread a Bronte novel.

In many ways the Bronte discussion was by far the most exciting as four of us were able to meet in person! Such fun to be able to catch up and, predominantly but not I confess exclusively, talk about books. Despite losing two of our members we are now at 8 which is ideal for discussion and, given we take turns to meet at each others houses, is quite enough for anyone to host. So currently our group is full. But, should you wish to go on a waiting list, please contact me through the website and I will put you on the list.

Our future is rosy. Our choice of novels is occasionally challenging and often the book one we would not have chosen ourselves; but that makes for good debate and is always accompanied by even better fellowship. Happy reading to everyone.

Mary Beth Greenop

French Conversation

We have already started meeting already and have had 2 garden meetings (today's was rained inside). We are a relatively small group (8) which is about right for everyone to contribute easily. So our group is full at the moment. We meet in each other's homes in turn and the host (as well as providing coffee and biscuits) chooses the subject and/or text on which to base discussion.

Elaine Griffiths

International Studies

While European Studies carried on with zoom we have decided to move on to International Studies. This includes history, culture, development and issues in all countries. There is plenty to go at.

The emphasis will continue to be discussion of members research and issues in an open and civilised way in the comfort of the Pinney Room. The social aspect has been much missed and we will start in September with a wake for former European Studies members, but any member would be welcome.

Then in October we start the new International monthly meetings (3rd Friday mornings) with the subject of China. All meetings this year will be free to all members but as numbers may have to be limited please contact David Harrison 01458 273177 if you wish to attend.

Then you can see if it is for you without forward commitment.

David Harrison

Jazz Appreciation

I have asked my last year's members their feelings about a restart and all the replies I had said wait and see.

If there is a more stable situation then I would be only too pleased to restart, but the current situation with Covid cases wavers considerably from day to day and week by week.

It does seem that many people in South Somerset are not taking seriously their responsibility for personal protection.

I see many people in and around shops in Somerton without face masks, many not safe distancing, and wonder why not.

My lounge is not really large enough to safe distance 8 or 9 (maybe more) and we would need to use the lounge which is the only place where equipment can be set up..

It would be wise not to encourage new membership at this stage.

I am very sorry. It is all so very frustrating.

David Munns

Collectables

I did reply to that earlier mail seeking ideas. However the Collectables Group will start on 8th September, we meet at the Somerton Sports and social club and our next meeting will be on "Fridge Magnets" as a starter topic of which most members will have examples.

We are actually pretty full with 14 members, and if we have more it rather truncates discussion of members' items.

I have reminded members of the means by which to pay their £18.00 subscription as I am not sure everyone (like myself) saw the item on the website.

Pauline Low

Short Mat Bowls

An update from the Short Mat Bowls group:
Restarting on Thursday, 2nd September
Venue: Long Sutton Village Hall
Time: 9.30 to 11.30

For the time being, we won't be actively seeking new members as we want to be sure that numbers are manageable.

Mike Fraser

Table Tennis

Arrangements are made for the Table Tennis group to return to action, on a weekly basis on Wednesday afternoons – excepting the last Wednesday in each month - from 8th September.

It is encouraging to find that the large majority of our members have indicated their intention to return to playing as soon as possible.

You of course will be welcome to come and join us at any time.

Mike Beeson

Somerton u3a Table Tennis

Restarting on 8th September

Meadway Hall, Compton Dundon

Wednesday afternoons

2.30—4.30

More information from Mike Beeson

Tel: 0771 574 7476

Email: beesonm@btinternet.com



Travel Group

Just to let you know that I do intend continuing to arrange coach day trips . However, I think I need to wait a while to see what happens with the Covid situation, keeping an eye on the data before relaunching them as I do not think members will be very keen to be confined close together in a coach at the present time.

I was in the process of organising a trip just before the first lockdown and found that the costs of hire had gone up quite significantly and am expecting that hire charges will have gone up even further as a result of the pandemic and higher fuel charges.

I do need to have nearly a full coach load in order to keep the fares at a reasonable and affordable level for members.

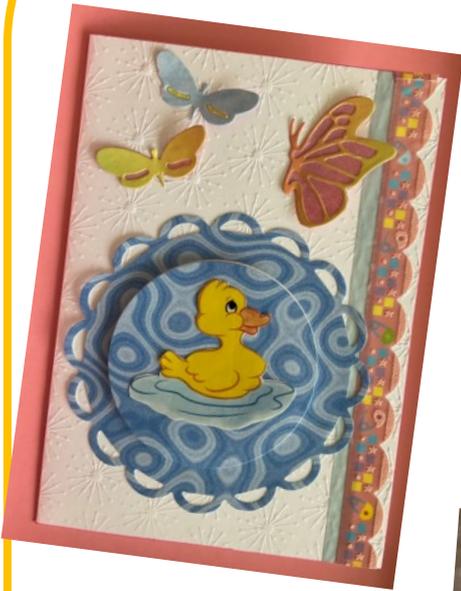
Personally I do not think it is worthwhile to organise a trip before the monthly coffee mornings start again at the Edgar Hall as I used pick up at least two-thirds of the total bookings at these meetings.

If the situation with the spread of the virus recedes significantly, I could possibly arrange a Christmas shopping trip for end of November.

Ruth Thomas

Travel group leader

Group News



**Craft
Group**



**Butterflies
and
Dragonflies**



Amanda Hooper

Sunday Gourmet Girls



*Left hand side nearest-furthest... Joan Banbury, Helga Stiles, Anita Clarke, Ann Mathieson,
Right hand side nearest to furthest....Alison Boswell, Mary Whittaker, Ali Relton (guest/former member), and Jean Chambers*

Group News

Bird Watching

On the first Monday in August, ten of us went to the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust reserve at Steart. It was a fine day and although this is not a good time of year for birds, there were still a number of Avocets about, as well as Shelduck. There are two species of Shelduck on the European list and the other, the Ruddy Shelduck, comes from the eastern Mediterranean. Well, surprise, surprise there was a very nice male quietly sunning itself on one of the island. Now these birds are often kept in wildfowl collections, but this one had no leg rings, or wing tags and so there is a good chance it was a wild bird that had managed to find its way to the UK. A number do each year. In addition, to the usual suspects – Grey Heron, Little Egret and various species of gull – one of our party managed to find two small waders in the distance that were identified as Little Ringed Plover. Birds on migration. Along with the Linnets and Goldfinches we saw feeding on the various seed heads, it was an interesting mornings birding. Steart is a new reserve that has developed well over the last five years and hold a lot of promise for future visits.

Richard Montagu

Dick's photos, Ham Wall



So who's an ugly duckling?



A doe eyed deer



Reed bunting



Coat hanger deer?



Female black cap

Group News

Garden Visits Group

A Visit to Wellfield Barn, Wells

Twelve hardy members of the garden visits group were given a warm welcome by owner of Wellfield Barn by owner, Virginia Nasmyth.

Twenty four years ago Virginia and her husband David bought a farmhouse plus yard and nearly two acres of land.

As Virginia said, "There wasn't one tree or shrub and David had to use a pickaxe to break up the concrete in the yard."

Over the years, following David's design of firm structure and relaxed planting, the garden has evolved a tranquil half acre garden. The design integrates house, lawn and garden with the landscape with wonderful views over the ha-ha to Glastonbury Tor. Grass walks lead to the pond/bog garden, mixed borders, hydrangea bed, formal sunken garden to an area of one hundred and twenty young and semi-mature trees.



The Garden Visits group undaunted by the weather

Not even a keen easterly wind could spoil a pleasant afternoon in such lovely surroundings and in such pleasant company.

New Groups Information

Badminton

Would anyone be interested in playing badminton?
Tuition wouldn't be provided, just a chance to meet up and play (any ability).

The options seem to be either once a month (initially), or establish a group and book a court(s) accordingly for the following week (so could be playing weekly as long as have at least 4 people).

Possibly early evening or weekends, but open to suggestions.

Amanda badminton@SomertonU3A.UK

Meeting the Duke of Edinburgh

The article by Raymond Jones in last month's newsletter reminded me of a time I met the Duke of Edinburgh. I was working in the publicity department of the Avon Rubber Co. in Melksham at the time. It was the early 60s. The company had just developed a new tyre, the 'Avon Super Safety' which gave superb traction on wet and slippery roads. The Duke was invited to try out the new tyres on a recently built skid pan.

The visit was planned in minute detail; arrival by helicopter at an exact time, 2 minutes to greet company personnel, 2 minutes to walk into the yard, 5 minutes here, 3 minutes there, etc. As is usual for royal visits, every department he was to see had been cleaned and spruced up. But things didn't go quite to plan. As the party walked across the yard the Duke spotted a very dirty man with a black face, black hands etc. among the workers who had come out to have a peep at him. He immediately walked over to the man and asked him what work he did. He worked in what was generally known as the "black hole", a part of the factory where carbon was added to the compounds and everything, including the men, was covered in carbon dust. The Duke was most interested and to the embarrassment of his guides insisted on seeing it. This was definitely not the plan, made a mockery of the carefully worked out schedule and led to some very red faces.

Helga Stiles

Diary Dates

zoom Talk

Fri Sep 24th Our guest speaker is International TV Comedy Writer *Brad Ashton* who has written over 1,000 TV shows including series for the likes of Tommy Cooper, Les Dawson, Dick Emery, Frankie Howerd, Bruce Forsyth, David Frost and Bob Monkhouse



Judi's garden in August

Members quotes

Members quotes

Members' Quotes

"It gives me a reason to go out."
Maggie

"Some many new and different activities to enjoy like aviation."
Pamela

"Got me back doing the things I enjoy."
Sylvia

What I enjoy is fun and laughter and meeting different people from all walks of life."
Judi

"Camaraderie! I missed it."
Pam

"There is such a variety of things to do."
Marion

"I love the visits to interesting places, especially when combined with pub lunches."
Gillian

Join if you want to find friendship, fun and stimulation."
Barbara

"I love it that at the Friday morning meetings, people I don't know start talking to me. People are so friendly."
Dave

"Newcomers are made to feel very welcome."
Joan

"I enjoy the monthly talks because I learn so much."
Sally

"Learning, stimulation, enjoyment, friendship, challenge, satisfaction."
Leo

"As new members, we've found everyone to be very friendly and we've really enjoyed the garden visits. We're looking forward to joining other groups."
Annette and Tony

"Belonging to a u3a group keeps my brain active."
Mark

"I look forward to going to my French conversation group as people there are so accommodating when I need more time to think of a word."
Joan

"Sport, music, dance and song with new and longstanding local friends at minimal cost."
Jadi

"U3aSom=mc²+ zing (=energy + education + entertainment)."
Dick

Educational, friendly, fun, exercising, mind stretching, relaxing, surprising, hard work"
Dee

Meeting like-minded people, learning new skills, and having fun."
Jenny

Organic Gardener...a few things I learnt in 2021 *Mike Davis*

Climbing french beans and courgettes plants produce much more than traditional plants, but must be if watered and fed thoroughly.

Grafted tomatoes, peppers and aubergines produce much more too. I believe the extra cost per plant is well worth it.

Buy small basil plants at the supermarket and transplant into large pots of compost to create huge plants to make delicious pesto.

Climbing strawberries taste magnificent and keep out of the soil without straw.

Bees love sunflowers and **hoverfly** love marigolds.

I have never experience a spring with so many blackbirds.

We do miss our 3 black cats, all died in 2020

The slow worms continue to enjoy our compost heaps with the dunnock watching

Tayberries are fun to grow and good to eat.

Swiss chard and Kale is easy to grow as long as you keep the cabbage white butterfly don't lay their yellow bundles of eggs. (fine netting)



Poppy...small, fast and wild

Keeping the Aging Gray Cells in the Brain Active

Here are the Answers

1. Johnny 's mother had three children. The first child was named April. The second child was named May. What was the third child's name?

Answer: **Johnny of course**

2. There is a clerk at the butcher shop, he is five feet ten inches tall, and he wears size 13 sneakers. What does he weigh?

Answer: **Meat.**

3. Before Mt. Everest was discovered, what was the highest mountain in the world?

Answer: **Mt. Everest; it just wasn't discovered yet. [You're not very good at this are you?]**

4. How much dirt is there in a hole that measures two feet by three feet by four feet?

Answer: **There is no dirt in a hole.**

5. What word in the English Language is always spelled incorrectly?

Answer: **Incorrectly**

6. Billy was born on December 28th, yet his birthday is always in the summer. How is this possible?

Answer: **Billy lives in the Southern Hemisphere**

7. In California , you cannot take a picture of a man with a wooden leg. Why not?

Answer: **You can't take pictures with a wooden leg. You need a camera to take pictures.**

9. If you were running a race, and you passed the person in 2nd place, what place would you be in now?

Answer: **You would be in 2nd. Well, you passed the person in second place, not first.**

10. Which is correct to say, "The yolk of the egg are white" or "The yolk of the egg is white"?

Answer: **Neither, the yolk of the egg is yellow [Duh]**

11. If a farmer has 5 haystacks in one field and 4 haystacks in the other field, how many haystacks would he have if he combined them all in another field?

Answer: **One. If he combines all of his haystacks, they all become one big one.**

Please send all articles for the Newsletter to the editor

kaywilliamson46@hotmail.com

Deadline for the October edition...20th September

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>