

SOMERTON U3A Newsletter

April 2020



LEARN LAUGH LIVE

Welcome to the first Digital Newsletter..!

Hello fellow U3A members and friends.

Now here is a little test for you. Do you still have the January issue of the Somerton U3A magazine ? On what page was the article about Beacon ? Did you read it ?

Answers : yes , 12, yes !

Well , the Committee agreed to adopt Beacon Management System in January and at the end of March all your membership details were loaded and we can now communicate to you all individually .

There are many other benefits of the system which we will tell you about over the coming weeks, but, first here is your April Newsletter, please tell us what you think , what do you like and how can we improve?

After all this is your newsletter .

I cannot thank the Committee enough for their continued help in running this wonderful U3A Group.

Judi, Chairman SU3A



Group News



Somerton U3A Ukulele Band & Singers

Marilyn Muffett

The Somerton U3A Ukulele group, known as SUBS (Somerton Ukulele Band and Singers), was formed by Sue Parry in 2015. From a small group of absolute beginners, the membership has expanded to 30 proficient players.

Bass and percussion have been added along the way to really enhance the sound. SUBS now play regularly to audiences in residential homes, luncheon clubs and dementia care groups, as well as many community events, both in and out of doors.



Often the organisers will give donations to the Somerset and Dorset Air Ambulance, our chosen charity, in appreciation and it has now benefited by over £1500.

The experience of learning a new skill, the pleasure of singing and the friendship and laughter within the group would seem to epitomise the objectives of the U3A.

Apart in Body, Together in Spirit

As we started planning the contents of the newsletter a few months ago, there are some group reports in the first edition.

Obviously now, in the time of self-isolation, we need to look at different kinds of content for our future newsletters.

It's up to you.

It would be interesting, and maybe helpful to others, to hear what sort of daily routine people have adopted and how it works for them.

Has anyone taken up the challenge to learn something completely new?

How are people keeping in touch with friends and families... Skype, FaceTime, Zoom, letters?

Would anyone like to predict how life will be different when normality returns?

Heard any topical jokes you'd like to share?

And of course, we really welcome your photos, you, your pets, your garden, anything that will amuse and entertain us all, in this challenging time.

We've heard that some groups are managing to keep in contact, Astronomy, Raspberry Pi and members of Veg, Cook and Eat challenging each other to come up with the most inventive meal from a given set of ingredients.

Please let us know if you are managing to "meet" as a group and what you are doing as this might inspire others to follow suit. Keep well, keep safe,

Kay



Group News Bird Watching trip to Exmouth

David Perkins

For our first February outing the Somerton U3A Bird Watching group took the RSPB boat trip on the River Exe, with Dereck, an excellent RSPB commentator on board. He explained that the estuary is a Ramsar Site, that is, one of international importance on account of its winter visitor population and summer breeding species - so we looked forward to seeing many species and were not disappointed.

It was explained that the reason for the variety and number of birds relates to the variety of food found in the differing sandbanks, mudflats, and waters – salt and fresh, and these were pointed out en voyage. It is not only birds that benefit from this habitat and three grey seals allowed us to visit them, showing the fish population can support them there as well.

The trip began at Exmouth Marina and we first visited the sand banks guarding the mouth of the river where Gulls and Shags were seen.

Moving up the river a large variety of waders were encountered (14) as we passed through the changing habitats. Some fed on the sand, e.g. Oystercatchers, and ascending the estuary, some on the mud - Curlew, etc. whilst others fed where streams brought different food into the estuary. Sanderling were seen rushing into and

out of the wavelets taking dinner, and the difference between Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits could be seen, each eating in its preferred café. We passed Redshanks and a solitary Greenshank.

The Common Seal brought an interlude, as did the geese, Dark Bellied Brent and Canada, together with the Red-Breasted Mergansers and Grebes, including the rare Slavonian female, quite different from the Great Crested Grebe that we often see on the Levels.

At the top of the estuary the water changes from nearly fresh and several species of duck were seen, Wigeon, Teal, etc. The Avocet flock were busy sieving small invertebrates, but several hundred yards further downstream than normal, as a result of extra silt muddying the water caused by Storm Dennis.

The total number of species seen during the day was 34, but your scribe only saw 32 of them, perhaps his giant pasty distracted him!



Aviation Group

10th Feb 20 report by Doug Skillicorn

Group News



Our Speaker, Stephen Matthewson, presented his talk entitled

"Excuses for Flying in the Jump Seat".



The talk covered runway improvements and design (e.g. Retils (Rapid Exit Taxiway Indicator Lights) at Gatwick and layout revisions at Lisbon), en-route management to minimise fuel costs on arrival (Eurocontrol), European Commission research (SESAR), delays (EDAG), Flight Operations Performance Committees at the airport, etc.

He said "I thought I would like to cover integrating those aspects and some projects that were fun". He mulled over a heading like "Marriage Counselling for ATM and Airports" but decided on "Excuses for Flying in the Jump Seat".

Stephen gave an enlightening exposé on the problems Airport Management (only interested in selling Duty Free) and Air Traffic Control have, in organising Airlines and their pilots in the efficient use of runways and taxiways to maintain optimum utilisation of allocated Take Off and Landing Slots. He explained the relevant separation requirements of the different aircraft types due to wake vortex turbulence and other criteria affecting the way aircraft are slotted into the holding pattern for landings and the pilot induced delays at Take Off caused by slow taxiing, slow responses to instructions, incomplete check lists and flight plans. The delays are compounded by non standard regulations applied by different countries affecting Take Off separation.

Stephen asked us to imagine the

ongoing chaos at a single runway airport like Gatwick at peak times when the optimum interval is 30 seconds between landing, take off, landing, take off. If an aircraft delays getting to the holding point, then is cleared for take off but takes 50 secs before beginning to roll whilst a landing aircraft is on short finals, this could involve a go-around producing further delays.

New long bodied aircraft (B787) landing are causing problems with runway to taxiway design and maintenance due to the extended distance between the nose wheel and the main gear. New gradual radius extended turn offs are needed to cope with the increased turning circle and the more careful (slower) exit from the runway.

All in all, a fascinating topic explaining the complexities of airport design, management, regulations, Air Traffic Control and Airline policies and Pilot Training.

Ray Jones

Aviation Group Leader,

Audrey Ellen Maddock was 100 on 14th February 2020. Here she is at Ashley House Residential Home with her congratulatory card from the Queen.

Audrey was the 107th person to become a member in Somerton U3A and her profile appeared in the Magazine in October 2016, issue 57.



Housework, Gardening and Facial Exercises in the Time of Self-Isolation

Judi Powell

Sarah, my sister, and I should be on our way to Liverpool and then board ing our ship to cruise to the Azores, Lois, my mother, on her holiday in Hatch Beauchamp and Kitty the cat, visiting Muchelney .

But, we are not, we all are confined to barracks, grounded in isolation!

However, the sun is shining and we are all well and, God willing, hope to continue to stay that way.

I cannot say that we have written a list of things to do but we are thinking of doing things differently. Yesterday we had a SPA DAY at home. Starting with a wash, a blow dry, followed by a pedicure, manicure and a facial; finished off with a cream tea and a glass of bubbly!

Then there is always the garden to keep ourselves amused, be it planting the irises, gladioli and lilies and sewing seeds. Just scattered a wildflower mix in the "orchard" that is the back bed with the fruit trees that we planted last autumn.

Weeding and mowing the lawn, cutting the edges, dead heading and endless tidying up: even made an area for the garden rubbish now the Council are no longer emptying the

green bins.

As the sun continues to shine and it is positively balmy, we have moved the patio furniture out of the "barn" and placed it on our new patio. Rick, our neighbour, rebuilt this for us just before Christmas and added a pergola. It has been wonderful sitting out in the afternoon and soak up some vitamin D and enjoying looking at the garden.

Just before the closure of Yandles I went over to buy a supply of knitting wool, about 70 balls ! That will keep Lois busy with her crochet blankets and I have started knitting (first time in 30 years) baby blankets for Yeovil Hospital .

Over the weekend we completed a 1000 piece jigsaw puzzle. We have loads in the cupboard and it will be fun to do some of the old ones and to share them with the neighbours; just leaving them on the door step for the swap.

We are now writing to the grandchildren a couple of times a week. It is fun for them to receive a letter in the post and their replies are now part of their English lessons .

I can still go shopping but only when we really need something. It has

been fun to eat through the freezer and defrost that soup that has been lurking around for a few months!

I have also been picking up the neighbours' prescriptions from the local garage. Great idea, so as not to have to visit the surgery. In return they are happy to add any shopping we cannot get locally to their Sainsbury's order.

If we do run out of tasks there is always the paintwork around the house that could have a touch up. Spring cleaning, not just the house, but I have even washed down the greenhouse inside and out.

In addition, I have sorted out the summer clothes and packing away the cruise clothes no longer needed.

I might even have time for eBay! We can now also get down to speaking to friends and family, spending more time listening and not rushing a call but making it more meaningful.

My Kindle is just full of books, be they novels or books of interest.

Love the exercises in the morning with the Green Goddess, tins of baked beans a must and the armchair cycling.

All articles for the Newsletter send to editor Kay at editorsu3a@gmail.com

Deadline for the May edition...20 April

Pictures welcome, but keep script brief

Minimum formatting please

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