

SOMERTON u3a

Newsletter 23 February 2022



Chairman's Message

Members of Somerton u3a committee are all very proud of managing to keep Somerton u3a functioning under very difficult circumstances during the long months of lockdown.

However, we could not have done it without the continuing support of you all. From group leaders maintaining contact with their groups, to members coming out of their comfort zones in learning how to negotiate the intricacies of Zoom, you have shown that Somerton u3a plays a very important role in your lives.

As mentioned in the January newsletter, the committee are now looking forward to a brighter future and 2022 promises to be a very different year from the past 2 years, hopefully filled with exciting events.

In June we have the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Anniversary, followed by the national u3a's 40th anniversary, National u3a day and Somerton u3a's very own 25th anniversary.

This is where we need your help again. We are looking to set up a volunteer group to help the committee plan, set up and organise events. In the past, we have always been able to call on individuals as "extra pairs of hands" when needed. However, the committee now feel that it would be a good time to set up a reserve team of helpers, the *Really Useful Group*, as a permanent addition to the work of the committee.

There would be no obligations, no requirement to attend committee meetings, although you would be very welcome if you wanted to. You would be able

to choose how much help you wanted to give and in which areas.

We would aim to hold meetings with you before any major events to involve you in the planning process, how you could help and equally important, ask you for your ideas.

If you are interested, we have already started planning our first big event of the year, the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Anniversary with the main events taking place between Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th June. This month, several members of the Somerton u3a committee attended a meeting of the *Promotion & Communications Committee*, part of *Somerton Town Council*, along with representatives from other Somerton clubs, schools and organisations.

Everybody was invited to put forward their ideas as to how they would like their organisation to participate. There were many ideas but everyone agreed that a large event on the sports field would enable all local organisations to participate in some way. Other ideas included an extended Friday market, a parade, music of all kinds and fancy dress.

It is now up to each individual organisation, including Somerton u3a, to come up with their own plans.

If you have any ideas about the u3a's participation in Somerton's Jubilee celebrations, please contact the new Events' Coordinator, Amanda Hooper. events@somertonU3A.UK

If you are interested in joining the new group, the *Really Useful Group*, please contact Kay on kaywilliamson46@hotmail.com

February Poem

In February

The birds have been singing to-day
And saying: "The spring is near!
The sun is as warm as in May,
And the deep blue heavens are clear."

The little bird on the boughs
Of the sombre snow-laden pine
Thinks: "Where shall I build me my house,
And how shall I make it fine?"

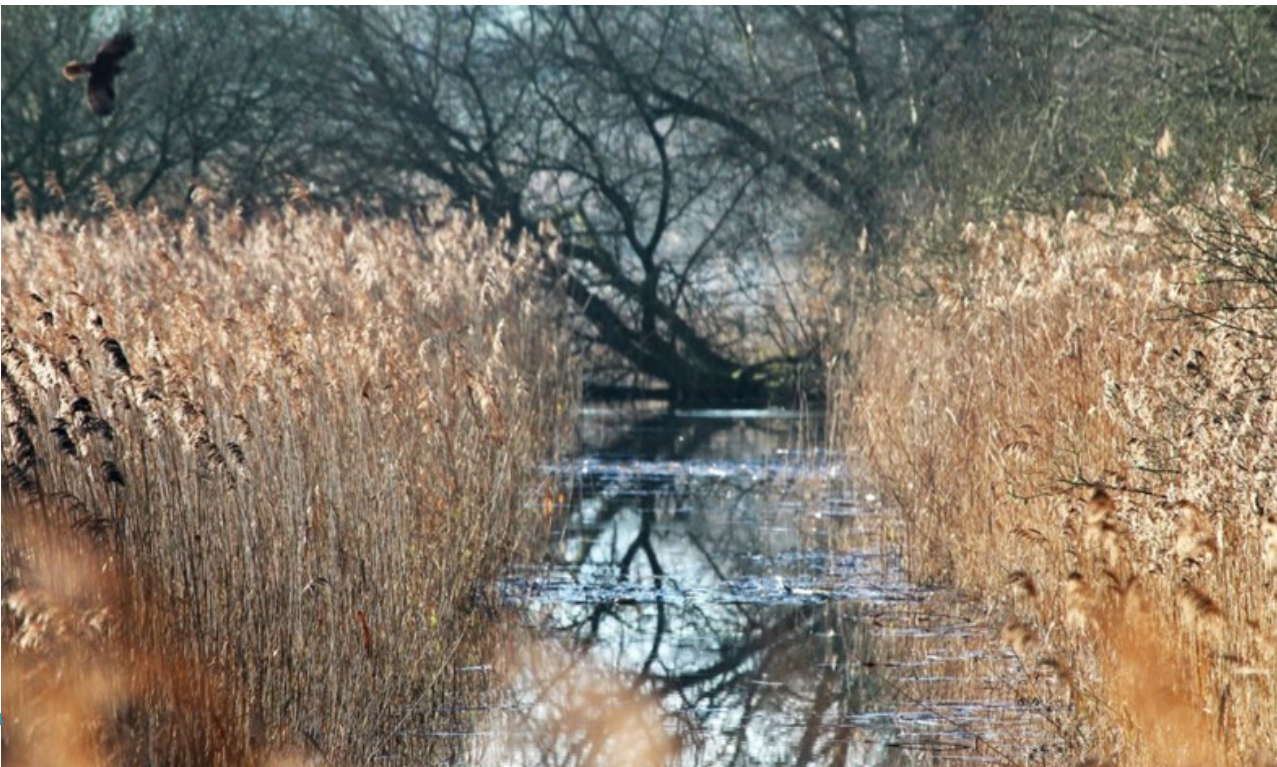
"For the season of snow is past;
The mild south wind is on high;
And the scent of the spring is cast
From his wing as he hurries by."

The little birds twitter and cheep
To their loves on the leafless larch:
But seven foot deep the snow-wreaths sleep,
And the year hath not worn to March

John Addington Symonds

Shapwick Reserve on a cold crisp January morning

Photo by Steve Davis



The SUBS would like to thank those who attended the Christmas Lunch for their generous donations for The Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance which amounted to £87.

Please save your used postage stamps and bring them to any Friday meeting for collection.

They will be sent to the Air Ambulance to assist their funding.

Marilyn Muffett

Apologies to Marilyn for missing this item out of the December newsletter.



Group News

Latest News about Groups

The following **new groups** have been started since the end of September.

French Refreshers with Anne Green meets in Langport (full)

Geology with Trevor Ryder meets at the Edgar Hall, plus outings to sites of interest.

Scrabble 2 meets in Langport, leader Jenny Healey

Mahjong for Beginners

Sunday Roasties, a third Sunday Lunch group that will meet on the first Sunday of each month under the leadership of John Day

Coffee and Chat at The White Hart at 10.30 on the second Thursday,

Badminton with Amanda Hooper,

Cycling with David Robins

Rummikub led by Marion Mander

Play reading led by Liz Short (I do not think this group has actually started meeting so far)

New Leaders

The following groups have new leaders:

Collectables with Joan Banbury

Pins and Needles with Sherry Briggs

Quiz group with Valerie Taylor

Strollers with Liz Short

Striders with Ruth Thomas

More news

Aviation will be restarting in February with a move to the Edgar Hall

Quiz group will be restarting in February with a new format

Local Discovery will be restarting in April

Skittles would like to start. We are waiting to hear from the Sports Club

Garden visits will probably restart in March

Coach outings will hopefully start again possibly in the spring.

Jazz appreciation will not be starting in the foreseeable future.

For the future

I am hoping to launch the following groups.

Local History

Upwords

Weekday eating

Jane Redgrove

Groups' Coordinator

Local history

After a recent appeal for a leader for the Local History group, 2 people have come forward and offered to do it together. Thank you for all of you who replied to say you wished to continue being in the group.

A new programme for 2022 is being considered, including visits to places of historical interest in the local area and possibly talks by outside speakers in the winter months.

A meeting will be arranged sometime in the near future to discuss plans and hear your ideas for visits as well.

Somerset is a county rich in ancient sites, historic buildings and home to many traditional crafts and industries so there is no shortage of places to visit.

If you are interested in joining this group please contact Jane Redgrove, Groups' Coordinator

groups@somertonU3A.UK

Birdwatching

The Mysteries of Migration

David Perkins



Have you got any bushes in your garden with berries on? Have you seen any chiffchaffs on them?

Chiffchaffs and other warblers migrate south, mostly beyond the Mediterranean in winter, but for about twenty years overwintering chiffchaffs in the UK have been increasing in numbers. The received wisdom was that some birds were deciding it was less of a risk staying here, and starving, than flying 1500 miles south which has dangers from shooting, destruction of their 'en route' refuelling sites, adverse weather and other critical factors..

Modern technology has enabled us to fix GPS location recorders to birds that allow us to follow their movements and these show us that the birds we see in the UK in winter time are not members of the same group that breed here in the summer. They are also migrants, and come from about the latitude of Austria, where they breed in the summer, and come to our sunnier climate to overwinter when continental Europe gets colder than it does here. They come in September and live off berries, presumably out of town, and come to our gardens when they have depleted the stock out there. In spring when 'our' birds are returning from Morocco, it's time for our winter birds to return south to set up their breeding territories there. This behaviour has been observed right across Europe and strangely whilst breeding birds from Austria, say, overwinter here, birds breeding in Spain go further east to Poland, Latvia and other eastern European countries for the winter.

Is this behaviour one of the results of climate change?

Group News

The Goldcrest



Photo from Dick Carlyon

Goldcrest spotted at Shapwick Reserve

The goldcrest is the U.K.'s smallest bird but makes up for it in colour.

It is 9cm in length and weighing 6g, the same as a 20p coin. The goldcrest gets its name from the crest of bright feathers in the middle of its head.

In the autumn large numbers arrive on the east coast from Scandinavia. They are often found in coniferous and mixed woodland, and occasionally in gardens. Unlike many of the U.K.'s birds, the population is increasing.

Notice the thin beak which is ideally suited to foraging in the canopy of trees for small insects, larvae, moth eggs and spiders,

Interesting fact: Once ornithologists did not believe that such small birds could not cross the North Sea unaided. They thought that they must be riding on the backs of woodcock or owls. Hence the traditional name, woodcock pilot.

The Red Dress Project *Viv Winterburn*

This was mentioned at our Social Group meeting on Thursday morning and as I was parked just opposite the Acearts Venue in Somerton I thought I would pop into have a look.

The exhibition was on until 29th January and also featured Somerset Artisans.

The Red Dress is a 12 year (2009-2021) award winning global collaborative embroidery project showcasing over 250 participants from 29 countries all contributing a representative part of their country's cultural history and nature. It was conceived by British artist Kirstie Macleod to provide a platform for women around the world (many of whom are marginalised living in poverty) to tell their personal stories through embroidery.

Nina Gronw-Lewis was one of those contributors, shown here, talking about the red dress.

She lives in Charlton Adam, although born in Shepton Mallet, so a local artist. As well as pointing out various sections of the dress informing all her extremely interested listeners from which country the embroidery was made, she also took part having embroidered the snowdrops.



It was truly beautiful as can be seen by the following photos –

The Red Dress travelled the globe being worked upon by 239 women and 5 men from 28 countries with the 136 commissioned artisans being paid for their work. The rest of the embroidery was added by 108 volunteers and audiences at various groups/exhibitions and events. It is constructed from 73 pieces of burgundy silk dupion.

More information about the project can be found on www.reddressembroidery.com as well as on Facebook and Instagram.

Embroiderers included Palestinian refugees, war victims from Kosovo, Rwanda and DR Congo as well as impoverished women from South Africa, Mexico and Egypt.

Acearts has a full and varied Exhibition programme for local and national artists throughout 2022 showcasing contemporary craft and art and it is open Tuesday-Saturday 10am-5pm at the Marketplace in Somerton. Their website is www.acearts.co.uk.

Over the years it has become a form of self-expression for women to tell their personal stories and now completed the 6.2 kg silk Red Dress is weighted by the individual stories and collective voices waiting to be heard as well as by the threads and beads that adorn it.

It is being exhibited in galleries and museums worldwide including Paris, Dubai, Mexico, Kosovo and the Royal Academy in London. Kirstie intends that the garment should visit all the countries and the particular homes of all those that contributed to the project and that is why it is now here in Somerton because Nina was one of the embroiderers.



Somerton Radio Station

Pamela Miley

On the 2nd April 1982, almost 40 years ago, Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands.. It was called Operation Rosario.

We had just bought our house in Somerton and on returning to Bedford, we told our friends where we were moving.

They had never heard of Somerton but then suddenly Somerton was featured on the news because the first news of the invasion came through to the radio station here.



I, very proudly told them that that was where we were moving to. The radio masts have long since gone but I'm still here.

This year we should remember all the service men who lost their lives or were injured in the conflict.

Somerton Radio Station opened in 1927 by the Marconi company, taken over the GPO in 1950 and closed in 2000 after 73 years of operation

New Members

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new members, who have joined since October, the start of our membership year:

Lesley Sigournay
Jenny Healey
Janet Leathem
Lorna Boulter
Bridget Scarborough
Simon Scarborough
Tina Murray
Bill Murray
Claire Bertschinger
Andy Sales

***What is
this?***

***Send us
your
ideas***

***Answer
next
month***



February Speaker at the Edgar Hall

Friday 28th January 10.30am

Linda Fisher.....Will making

The speaker booked for the Friday meeting at the Edgar Hall on 25th February is Linda Fisher.

Taunton based Linda is a professionally trained will writer. She manages *Will Management Services* and has over 10 years experience in the will writing industry.

Her presentation, *Protect the Ones You Love*, covers the following topics: estate planning, asset protection, inheritance tax, lasting powers of attorney, funeral planning and tax.

Linda provides handouts on all the above issues and is happy to answer questions, both to an audience or on a one-to-one basis as required.



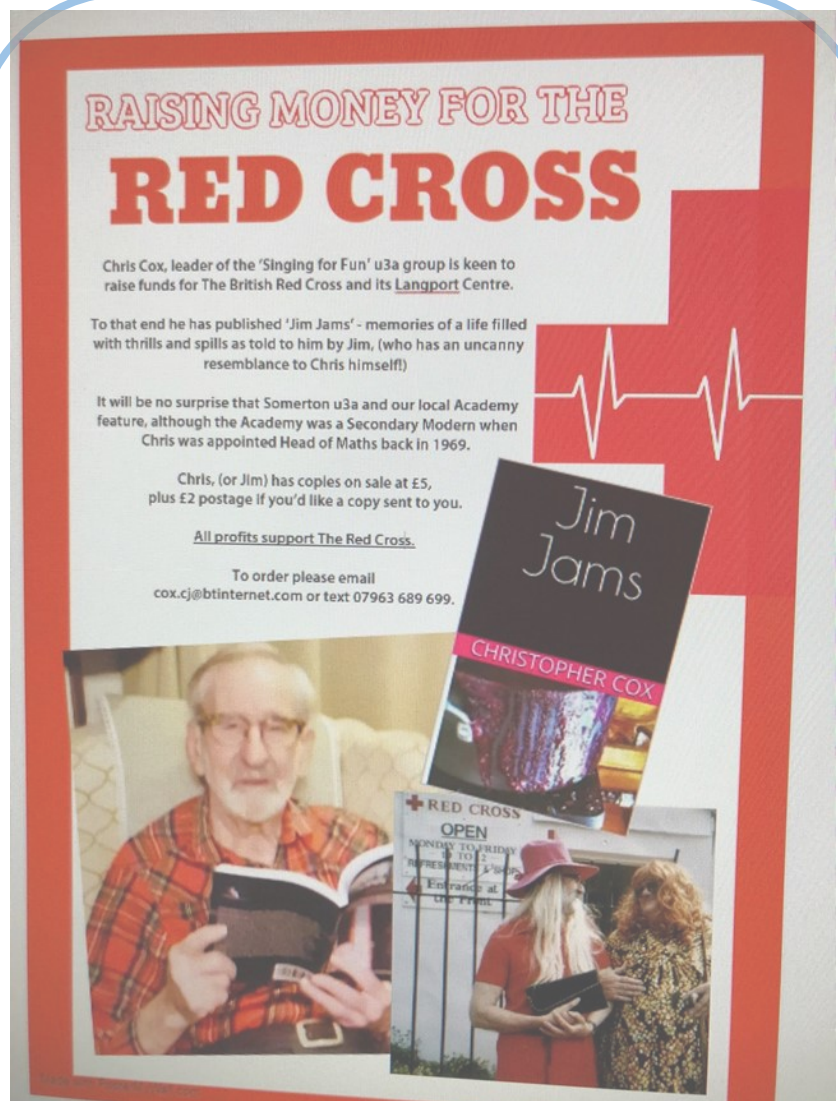
Thank you Su3a!

I thank all the members of the committee for their hard work ; as everybody knows, there is no other u3a like the Somerton one. Most people who have moved away have found that out. The approach and friendliness to all newcomers is very welcoming and help with anything is always available..

I am moving to West Bridgford, Nottingham on January 31st to be nearer my family.

I made a lot of friends during my 25 years in the Somerton u3a, and it is quite sad to say goodbye, so I say "Aufwiedersehen"

Cheerio Ingrid Grisdale



RAISING MONEY FOR THE RED CROSS

Chris Cox, leader of the 'Singing for Fun' u3a group is keen to raise funds for The British Red Cross and its Langport Centre.

To that end he has published 'Jim Jams' - memories of a life filled with thrills and spills as told to him by Jim, (who has an uncanny resemblance to Chris himself!)

It will be no surprise that Somerton u3a and our local Academy feature, although the Academy was a Secondary Modern when Chris was appointed Head of Maths back in 1969.

Chris, (or Jim) has copies on sale at £5, plus £2 postage if you'd like a copy sent to you.

All profits support The Red Cross.

To order please email cox.cj@btinternet.com or text 07963 689 699.

Jim Jams
CHRISTOPHER COX

RED CROSS
OPEN
MONDAY TO FRIDAY
8.30 TO 11
IMPROVEMENT & FUN
Entrance at the Front

Copies will also be available to buy at the February monthly meeting at the Edgar Hall..... Chris Cox

u3a Online Learning Events

The national u3a are still offering a wide range of online events. Most of them are free delivered by members for members. Some events, when offered in conjunction with leading organisations such as the National Gallery, the Royal Institution and the British Library have a small fee.

Many events are being delivered via the Zoom video conferencing/webinar platform. For those lacking confidence in using zoom there are guides and online tutorials.

February, March and April Programme

Cryptic Crosswords – 6 sessions from Thursday 3rd February to Thursday 10th March at 10am.

Free - Online via Zoom

Laughter Yoga Workshops – 2nd Wednesday of February, March, April – 9/2, 9/3, 13/4 at 10am

Free - Online via Zoom.

Rembrandt & The Third Age – Tuesday 15th February at 10.00

Free - Online at Zoom

Egyptology: The Valley of the Queens - Friday 18th February at 2pm

Free – Online via Zoom

Exploring World Faiths – Spiritualism – Wednesday 23rd February at 10am.

Free – Online via Zoom.

UK Marine Wildlife – Wednesday 23rd February at 2pm.

Free – Online via Zoom

Geometric Abstraction – Thursday 24th February at 2pm.

Free – Online via Zoom

The Human Microbiome – Part 1 – Wednesday 9th March at 2pm.

Free – Online via Zoom

For more details go to the u3a website, Online learning Events where there is more information on the content of the talks and speakers.

Please send all articles for the Newsletter to the editor

kaywilliamson46@hotmail.com

Deadline for the March edition...20th February

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>