

SOMERTON u3a

Newsletter 24

March 2022



Upcoming Events

u3a Coach Trips

I am delighted to announce that I will be restarting our Day Out Coach trips for members in March.

Details as follows:

Destination: EXETER

Date: WEDNESDAY 30TH MARCH

Cost: £12 per person

Payment:

either by

Cheque made payable to Somerton u3a

or by

Bank Transfer

Account Name: Somerton u3a

Sort Code: 30 18 16

Account Number: 00958442

Reference: Coach Trip

(Cash will be accepted at the Monthly Coffee / Speaker morning in March.)

There will be 3 pick up /drop off places

9.00am Huish Church Car Park (Langport)

9.10am Bus Stop opposite Gassons Lane / Sports field

9.20am Somerton Market Square

For those members who have not yet joined us on a Coach trip, we simply drop you off at a central location in the town and then pick you back up at the appointed leaving time to return at the same location. This means you are totally free to enjoy the visit as you wish. You can shop, lunch, sightsee, visit the cathedral or museums, book a guided tour or anything else that takes your fancy.

Book early to avoid disappointment.

Contact Ruth Thomas:

Email: ruthvthomas@tiscali.co.uk Tel: 01458 251687

Edgar Hall Monthly Meeting

'Return of the Loose Canon' - Brian Pearson

Fri 25th March

In this instance, the 'Loose Canon' is U3A member,

Rev Canon Brian Pearson, who returns to share more of his experiences from the years he spent alongside the bishop who became Archbishop of Canterbury.

Brian began his working life in IT with IBM before moving into higher education where he specialised in medical informatics. Ordained into the Anglican Church in 1979, Brian worked in a variety of parishes before joining the personal staff of the then Bishop of Bath and Wells. When the bishop was 'elevated' to become the 103rd Archbishop of Canterbury, Brian moved with him, to fulfil a brief that extended both nationally and internationally.

Brian is married to Althea, who, following her retirement as a consultant psychologist, became the volunteer coordinator for ACEarts. They have two adult sons and a four-year-old grand-daughter.



Somerton u3a Holiday in Suffolk

Somerton U3A presents

The Historic Houses & Heritage of Suffolk

5 days from £629 Departing 3rd October 2022



FEATURES

- 4* hotel
- Half board accommodation
- All excursion travel & guided tours included
- Blue Badge guide on Days 2 to 4
- Executive coach throughout

WHAT WE WILL SEE

- Audley End House & Gardens
- Christchurch Mansion – guided tour
- Constable Country – East Bergholt, Dedham & Bridge Cottage
- Aldeburgh – guided tour
- Red House
- Sutton Hoo
- Ickworth House
- Melford Hall
- Lavenham
- Gainsborough's House – guided tour
- Beth Chatto's Gardens

ACCOMMODATION

We stay four nights on a half board basis at the 4* Stoke by Nayland Hotel (www.stokebynayland.com) on the outskirts of Leavenheath. Located in a countryside setting and 10 miles from the centre of Colchester, facilities at the hotel include a restaurant, bar, indoor swimming pool, gymnasium, sauna, steam room and a Jacuzzi. All rooms are en suite and feature television, telephone, hairdryer, and tea & coffee making facilities.

EXTRAS TO YOUR TOUR

- Insurance (including Covid cover) £28
- Single room supplement £99
- Entrance fees to places visited as part of this itinerary (NT properties free to NT members & EH properties free to EH members)
- Gratuities

Price based on twin share. Minimum numbers required. Normal booking conditions apply.



Bridge Cottage

For more information on this tour contact your Group Organiser

Jane Redgrove

Tel: 01458 899962

Email: redgrove@btinternet.com

62 Pearmain Road, Somerton TA11 6AY



Tailored Travel's ATOL number is 5605



*There is still time to sign up for the holiday to Suffolk.
Please contact Jane Redgrove. 01458 899962 redgrove@btinternet.com
to register your interest as soon as possible.*

Group News

Groups with Vacancies

17th February 2022

All group leaders can be contacted via the groups page on the website:

www.u3asites.org.uk/somerton

Quiz group meets on the 3rd Monday afternoon at the Sports Club, Gassons Lane, Somerton.

New members always welcome.

Contact Valerie Taylor

Sunday Roasties meets on the 1st Sunday and can accept a few more members. On 6th March they will be eating at The Lime Kiln, Long Sutton at 1 p.m.

Contact John Day

Aviation has no limit on numbers. They meet on the 1st Friday at 10 a.m. in the Edgar Hall. There is a charge of £4 per session to cover hire of hall and speaker's fees. On 4th March the speaker will be Peter Whyte with a talk entitled "The Wooden Wonder", a definitive enlightenment on the DeHavilland Mosquito.

There is a full list of talks for 2022 on the website.

Geology offers a mixture of indoor meetings in the Edgar Hall conference room on the 1st Thursday at 2 – 4 p.m. and site visits which will obviously last longer and the day may be altered.

March – The Jurassic in Somerset

April – Visit to Ham Hill Geology Trail

May – The Somerset Coalfield and the work of William Smith

June – Visit to the Somerset Coal canal/Radstock Museum

Further details from the leader, Trevor Ryder.

History group meets in the Pinney Room on the 1st Thursday 10-12 a.m. There are spaces for 2 or 3 new members. Currently, the group is looking at British history 1920-40. Personal research is followed by discussion at the meeting.

Contact Nancy Schooling for more information.

Singing for Fun meets in the West Street Church on 2nd Thursday at 2 p.m. and that is what they do, singing a mixture of songs from the musicals, traditional folk songs and other popular songs. The words are projected onto the screen and Chris accompanies the singers on the piano.

Jazz Appreciation will be meeting for the first time in many months on 4th March and then hope to continue on the 1st Friday. Meetings will take place in Naomi Powell's house in Curry Rivel. (Lifts available from Somerton if needs be).

Contact David Munns 01458 272573 for more details.

Lots more **music** available in Enid Thresher's **Opera and Music Appreciation groups**. 3 groups which all take place in the first week of each month.

Further details on the website.

Enid also offers **Art Appreciation** on the 3rd Monday of the month.

Badminton usually meets on Fridays at the Huish Episcopi Sports Centre.

Group leader, Amanda Hooper.

Scrabble 2 needs new members. They have been meeting in Langport on Wednesday afternoons but I understand this could be changed to suit the needs of members.

More details from the leader, Jenny Healey.

Photography The group discuss all aspects of taking an image and producing it either on-screen or in print. We also have a couple of on-site visits plus classroom practicals. It does not matter whether you use your phone or camera, it is all relevant if you wish to improve your photography.

Meetings are held in the Edgar Hall on the 3rd Thursday or on-site for a photo adventure.

Leaders David Slocombe and Doug Skillicorn.

Committee has vacancies. Contact Judi Powell for more information. judimp@icloud.com

Group News

Groups with Vacancies

Computing Hardware problems, software problems and even operator problems. This group focuses on practical help for computers and phones. They concentrate on Windows but can also do Apple, Linux and Android. They meet in the Edgar Hall on 1st Tuesday.

Leaders, David Slocombe and Doug Skillicorn.

Social Bridge has unlimited vacancies. Each 'Table of four' meets in the homes of its members at times and intervals agreed by them.

Helga Hincks arranges the initial introductions. Contact her if you are looking for more information.

Science and Technology meets via Zoom at 10 a.m. on the 4th Thursday. There is usually a presentation followed by a discussion/question session. We cover a wide range of topics.

No presentations go into any deep mathematics, they are all kept at a high level and suitable for anyone who has an interest in the world around them.

Leader, John Light.

Some recent and future topics include:

The latest news about Fusion reactors

Storing electricity

4.5 billion years in 69 minutes-the history

What we can learn about climate change from the geological records

All about cephalopods (octopuses)

Flowers in medicine

A visit to CERN and the Large Hadron Collider

More details of talks on page 5

Raspberry Pi Group This group meets every Tuesday morning via Zoom and is rather a 'geekish' group mainly for retired engineers who would like to keep their hand in, designing new things. In the past we have designed and built a robot that looks like a Rubik cube and then solves it, An RCD tester and a meter for measuring low resistances.

Our current projects are a data logger to monitor the performance of a house just fitted with a heat pump and a challenge to see if we can design and build a ball which will roll itself and be 'driven' from a phone.

As the name implies, all our projects are based on a Raspberry Pi computer running Linux, and most of the software we write is in Python, generally with HTML and PHP providing the user interface.

If you need more information, please contact John Light.

Striders meet on the 2nd Friday morning. Members of the group take turns to plan a walk. The aim is to walk 3-5 miles, off road, exploring the beautiful countryside around us.

Contact Ruth Thomas.

Family History meets in the bar area of the Edgar Hall on the 4th Monday, 2 – 4 p.m.

In addition, the group leader can offer individual advice on the 2nd Monday.

Booking essential for this. Contact Viv Winterburn for more information.

Newly formed **Spanish Conversation** has vacancies.

Contact David Robins

Some proposed new groups

Local History Judi and Kay are working on a program to re-launch the Local History group.

Croquet The weather will improve and then Pamela Branley will be ready to teach you to play croquet at the club in Street.

Please contact Jane via groups@somertonu3a.uk if you would be interested in any of the following ideas

Italian Conversation, Skittles, Kurling or Upwords

Jane Redgrove, Groups' Coordinator

Group News

u3a Cycling

Hello everyone, well you may have seen the article December u3a newsletter about a new cycling group. Well we were hoping for one or two members to make some enquiries and join us but so far the its been very quiet. All very disappointing. Don't be put of by all these cyclist you see whizzing along the roads these days on racing bikes and tight Lycra. We are not quite up to that standard (yet)!

A typical ride would be to say Langport; keeping off the main roads and going via Pitney and High Ham and of

course we have a cup of coffee when we get there. The whole reason for this "cycling lark" is to keep fit and enjoy the company of like minded people.

So come on, come and join us even if you have an electric bike which seems to be the fashion at the moment, but you will have to wait for us. We normally meet on a Tuesday at the Sports Club in Gassons Lane.

Contact Dave 07831 323582

Science & Technology

Our Zoom meetings are at 10.00 – 12.00 usually on the fourth Thursday of the month and will cover the following topics:

24th February – A Visit to CERN and the Large Hadron Collider

This talk will be given by a guest speaker Leigh Edwards.

24th March – "The Earth's Atmospheric Circulation and Climate"

This talk will be given by Trevor Ryder

28th April – The Use of Flowers in Medicine

This talk will be given by Dr David Robins

If you are not a member of S&T but would like to join one of these Zoom presentations please email me at U3A@jmlight.co.uk

John



The Raspberry Pi Group

The group meet by Zoom every Tuesday 10.00 – 12.00, and we are currently working on two projects.

A project to look at the energy efficiency of your house by logging the inside and outside temperatures and the quantity of energy you are using. As we all need to become more 'green' in the future it is important to know where your energy is going.

The second project is more of a challenge, and just for fun. Can we design and build a ball that will roll around and be steered from a smart phone?

The answer at the moment is NO, but we are still working on it!

John

How I Learned to Love Opera



I was brought up with classical music and have always enjoyed listening to a wide range of styles and genres. As a teenager, I played in the orchestra of an amateur dramatics group and had fun with Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. But at the very mention of the word 'opera', I would close my mind, convinced that it was just fat ladies screaming at the top of their voices and people strutting about whilst singing to each other instead of talking. I thought it elitist and definitely not for the likes of me.

However, when I found out that Somerton u3a had a group for the appreciation of opera, I decided to give it a go. After all, I would either love it or hate it and could leave at any time. So, with many preconceived ideas and the absolute certainty that I would hate it, I attended my first group meeting.

For the first hour, I sat and watched suspiciously, sure that I would not be returning to this group, but gradually I was drawn into the action and by the end, to my great surprise, was starting to feel something different. Perhaps I had been wrong all this time.

Over the next few sessions, this pattern was repeated. I would start off sceptically, then as I became engrossed in the action and learnt more about the different styles and became more familiar with some of the singers, I realised that I had finally 'got it' and I was completely hooked.

This transformation is entirely due to Enid, who leads the group. She has an amazingly wide knowledge of the genre and willingly shares this with us. Enid has introduced us to works ranging from early 16th century to

21st century and, while I do not like them all, this has enabled me to discover so much. Over the years opera has developed, different directors give us varying productions with different settings, costumes, scenery and, of course, different singers.

So, not only have I found great pleasure in opera as a whole, but I have also discovered some amazing singers. I have nothing but praise for their skill. They must have great voices, they must be able to remember the complex music and maintain their own part, while others around them are singing something else. And they must be able to act.

In earlier productions, it seems to me, that the most important thing was the singer (divas like Maria Callas were another turn-off for me) but in modern productions acting is so important and I think this is partly why I have come to love it so much.

The fact that there are so many attractive young singers (baritones are my favourite) also helps of course!!

I am now 80 and regret the many years I have wasted by eschewing this marvellous art-form.

If you would like to discover more about opera, I am sure Enid would welcome you to the group. (You can get her details from Jane Redgrove, the groups' coordinator.)

Madeleine Smith

Poems

March

by Mary B. C. Slade

The stormy March has come again,–
March! March! March!

And rattling down the window pane,–
March! March! March!

Come rushing torrents of the rain,–
March! March! March!

But o'er my head my hat I swing,
And shout hurrah! like anything!
Because it is the first of Spring –
March! March! March!

by William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

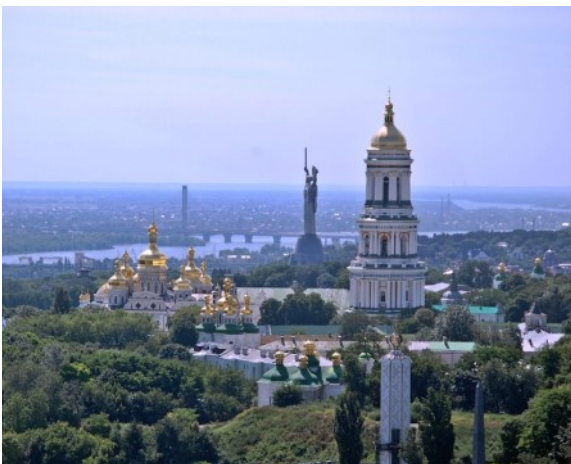
IT is the first mild day of March:
Each minute sweeter than before
The redbreast sings from the tall larch
That stands beside our door.

There is a blessing in the air,
Which seems a sense of joy to yield
To the bare trees, and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.



Ukraine

M Elee Aug 2018



my grandmother was born

a squalling baby

in the sun of the Ukraine,

her mother too young

and a father too violent.

she led her through the wheat
fields

whose long tresses tangled

in her pale ankles

to a pond behind the farm

where she tried to drown her.

a passerby intervened

and raised my grandmother

with his wife up the hill

on their own.

she spent her life

not cursing the hands

that sought to destroy

when they ought to have held

but thanking the hands

that pulled her

from the freezing water

on a crisp morning

in the fields of the Ukraine

lungs still full of breath

and eyes full of trust



Falling in Style talk

Lottie Dale

The January speaker for programme of talks at the Somerton u3a monthly meeting was Lottie Dale who entertained members with her account of being a member of a women's free fall parachute teams in the 80s and 90s. Lottie entertained over 100 members at the Edgar Hall with tales of her parachuting career, spanning 17 years and making over 1,700 jumps.

Inspired by her Spitfire flying father, Lottie yearned to fly but as that ambition was out of reach, she took up parachute jumping. Lottie fell in love with it and was soon learning to manoeuvre in the air and linking up to other people to make shapes in the sky. She joined a group was soon entering competitions in the UK and Europe doing free fall jumps linked to up to 60 people.



Lottie at the Edgar Hall



Lottie free falling with 39 other team members

Future Events

Somerton u3a Events Team are currently talking with Somerton Town Council about how we can assist with any Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

Later in the year, it is hoped that individual groups will find ways to celebrate 25 years of Somerton u3a.

Alongside this there could be a large event open for all Su3a members. You will be asked for your thoughts soon via a questionnaire; meanwhile, there will be an events board at the monthly Edgar Hall meetings and please see us or contact us if you have any suggestions.

Thanks

Amanda and Events Team events@SomertonU3A.UK

Monthly speaker programme

All meetings are at the Edgar Hall on the 4th Friday of the month with Zoom support.

Friday 22nd April 10.30am

Debbie Bertwisle - *A talk on the work of the DSAA, Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance*

Members of the committee felt that Debbie's talk on the work of Somerset and Dorset Air Ambulance service, given in October by Zoom was so inspirational that they felt it should be repeated, if possible, to a live audience at the Edgar Hall.

Friday 27th May 10.30am

Ashley Jones – Regional Fraud Protect Advisor, Avon & Somerset Police

Recipient of an MBE in 2019 for services to charity and older people.

Senior Safety

Ashley is internationally recognised as an expert in the field of crime prevention in the financial exploitation of the vulnerable and senior citizens and will be giving a talk on how we can protect ourselves from fraudsters.

Mistletoe not yet done



Mistletoe seeds evenly spaced in the strand of sticky euphonia poo. Only one mistletoe seed is in each fruit, so these seeds are stuck together in the bird's intestine

Please send all articles for the Newsletter to the editor

kaywilliamson46@hotmail.com

Deadline for the April edition...20th March

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>