

SOMERTON u3a

Newsletter 36

April 2023



Chairman's message

May I again begin by offering, on behalf of the Membership, our condolences to the relatives and friends of two of our members who have died recently.

John Light had been a member for many years and had a particular interest in the Raspberry Pi, Science & Technology and Computer Groups, a Group Leader, and a friend to many.

Jill Clements was a very supportive member of the Sunday Lunch Group and a wonderful friend to those who knew her. Both will be sadly missed.

On a lighter note, we are looking forward to celebration and fun! We have two great events to look forward to soon, a Barn Dance being held in the Parish Room in April and our Coronation Lunch, being held in the Edgar Hall in May. Both events are advertised in the Newsletter and on the web site and I would urge you to book your tickets now. We also have a terrific line up of speakers booked for our Monthly Meetings and I am very pleased to say that we are attracting more members to these. It is an opportunity to meet up with friends and, if you have been reluctant to join us, for whatever reason, please give it a try.

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Best wishes,

Steve Davis.

HAPPY EASTER!

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Monthly meetings and talks

Fri Apr 28th

Janet Seaton and Barry Winetrobe - "Town Criers"

Janet, Chair of Langport & District History Society, and Barry are well known in the area and have given many talks to Somerton History Society.

Fri May 26th

Somerton u3a A.G.M

The meeting will consist of the Treasurers Report, the Chairman's Report, the election of the Committee and other business. An Agenda will be available beforehand to all members.

Following the sad death of Doug Skillicorn and Marilyn deciding to stand down as Membership Sec. at the AGM, the Committee will be needing volunteers to fill the vacancies.

Our u3a cannot operate without a full committee so, if you feel that this is something that you would like to get involved with or you would just like some information about what being a committee member entails, then please speak to any present member as soon as possible. We would love to have you join us

Fri Jun 23rd

David Boag - wildlife photographer

ICELAND, A WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHERS VIEW

There is such a wild, remoteness to most of Iceland that it is a photographers dream. So much space, so much air, so much rain! Lush vegetation clothes great sweeps of mountainside right down to the beaches of black, volcanos sand. A multitude of birds, many of which are

British rarities, choose Iceland as a perfect nest location where they can safely raise their young. Comparatively few land mammals are found on Iceland but they have unique wild horses that have that are part of their Viking heritage. The landscape is awesome with some of the most magnificent waterfalls I have every seen.

David has been to our u3a on 2 previous occasions and is a very popular speaker with outstanding photographs.

Fri Jul 28th

Author, Brian Wright

"The Dragons of Somerset."

An illustrated Talk

In Somerset traditional stories about dragons date back 1,000 years in some cases. We will explore the origins of dragons, their symbolism, and look at some of the many images of these fabulous creatures to be found in this county from the Saxon period onwards, as well as hearing some of the traditional local stories about them.

About the Speaker

Brian Wright.

Brian is qualified as an archaeologist, and worked on a number of excavations in London and Surrey, as well as at the Roman city of Wroxeter in Shropshire. He specialised in the microscopic examination of pottery, but is now primarily an historian. His experience in archaeology, science and historic research enables him to present subjects in what, he feels, is a unique way. He has run courses on Archaeology, Folklore, British Mythology and Antiques for a number of colleges. He has written a number of books on both folklore and other historic subjects, as well as many articles. At present, he gives individual talks to a wide range of groups



Future Events



Barn Dance on Friday **21st April**

in the Parish Rooms from 7pm to 10pm

Coronation Lunch

Monday 8th May

1.30-4.00 Edgar Hall

Buffet lunch 1.50

Entertainment

Tea/ coffee with a slice of Coronation cake!

Table quiz

*Competitions

*Design (and wear!) a crown

*Make something,
any media, associated with the coronation of
King Charles III

*(eg floral, edible, painting, photography or craft made from card/ fabric/
threads/ clay/ wood etc)*

Please could you advise of your intention to make something at least a week in advance. events@SomertonU3A.UK

Entries will be judged by visual impact and/ or use of recycled materials.

£15 by 23rd April please. Cheque payable to Somerton u3a or Bank transfer 30-18-16, account 00958442. Please email treasurer@somertonu3a.uk if have paid by Bank transfer or have dietary requirements .

Group News

Reading Group *Mary Beth Greenop* *visit to The Mousetrap*

Some months ago the Reading Group decided that we would each choose an Agatha Christie story we had not previously read to discuss at our monthly meeting. As Agatha Christie remains the world's best selling author, and was a colourful character, we had no shortage of material to discuss!

So when we found out that The Mousetrap Touring Company 2023 were performing at the Octagon this was the perfect choice for our yearly group visit. And what a



good time we had! Several of us had seen the play before and some even remembered "who done it", but that didn't spoil it one jot. To add to the fun the touring company kindly gave us permission to go onstage for a photograph. But who was the killer this time?

Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance Event

On a cold, windy and damp Saturday morning, four members of the **Somerton Ukulele Band and Singers u3a group** visited Henstridge Airfield. We had been invited as recognition of our fundraising efforts on their behalf. After welcome tea and coffee we went out of the hangar to see inside the helicopter and listen to one of the Pilots describe his side of the operation. It seems that whilst horses are frightened by helicopters cows really appreciate them and will watch as they land and approach for a close inspection. This results in the Pilots having to herd them away after the medical team have left so they can take off again!

Next we were shown the cars which are used when the helicopter isn't needed or is not available. One car carries all the same equipment as the helicopter. As a bonus we watched the helicopter being moved into the hangar for some essential maintenance work, this is done with equipment which enables one

person to complete the task.

Following this we visited the operations room where calls are received from Exeter and flights are planned. A Critical Care Practitioner explained his role in the service.

Downstairs again and a Critical Care Consultant (all the Doctors are Consultant grade) showed us in more detail all the equipment they have which enables life saving Intensive Care to be given in any location and facilitates fast transfer to appropriate hospitals.

The Charity needs to raise £1 Million a year to provide the service and is entirely funded by donations. As well as money they are happy to

receive used postage stamps and old coins of any denomination. They often fly two or three times a day/night and approximately twenty times in a week. They are highly skilled and dedicated people who really impressed us with their commitment.



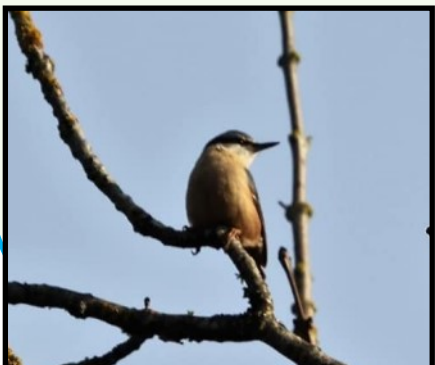
Group News

Birdwatching Group

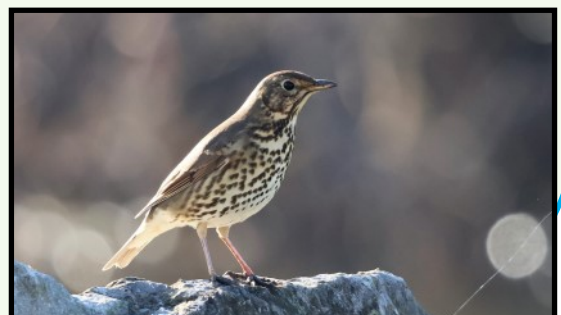
Recently, the Birdwatching Group have been out at Swell Woods with Dion our very knowledgeable guide.



Members of Somerton u3a were out doing a bird count in January. The Birdwatching Group is just one of over 50 interest groups available to our members.



Visit our web site to find out more about us



Group News

Local History Group

At the beginning of March the Local History group returned to Stourhead House for the "Behind closed Doors" tour. We had an excellent guide and we visited areas from the attics to the cellars. The staff quarters were basic as was the nursery, high windows and no views so no distractions ! We saw the valet's room and the lady's maid room which doubled as their areas of work to carry out task, ironing, mending etc. Then down to the kitchens and cellars and wine store.

Here are some comments from the members

"our excellent guide provided us with an insight into what it took to run a large house"

"this was an interesting and revealing visit and we all enjoyed lunch in the site restaurant"

"this tour was fascinating and offered an essential backdrop to how the 'great and good' were able to live their lives and the unseen loyal labour force kept the show going"

"loads of information but left with lots of questions (where do all those closed off tunnels lead to?)

Parties in the wine cellar? –

hope it gets a bit of a clean first or all the guests would need to wear overalls!"

If I remember correctly Lady Hoare refused to use the "newly installed" toilets because " everyone would know why I was going in there"!



Top Floor.—All these Chimneys should be Climbed for Cleaning.

Best Bed Room Floor.—All these Chimneys should also be Climbed, as some of the Chimneys are too large for the Sweep's broom, and others are very crooked. The Chimney in LADY HOARE'S Dressing Room will require the Store taking out for Sweeping, as the Register at lack of Store is not large enough to admit a Man, and the Flue is so crooked that no broom of any kind will pass through.

Ground Floor.—All Chimneys on this Floor should also be Climbed. The large Dining Room, or Saloon, has two Flues. The Entrance Hall has also two Flues, and in both cases the two Flues can be seen from the fire-places. The Flue belonging to the Turkish Bath will require Sweeping with a Machine, or Broom as usual, and all the Soot Doors used for this purpose. There is one inside the Bath.

Basement.—All the Flues in Basement will require Climbing, with the exception of Flue from Store in Preserving Room, and the Flue from Hot-plate in Kitchen. This Flue has a Soot Door over the Hot-plate up in Chimney, for clearing away the soot.

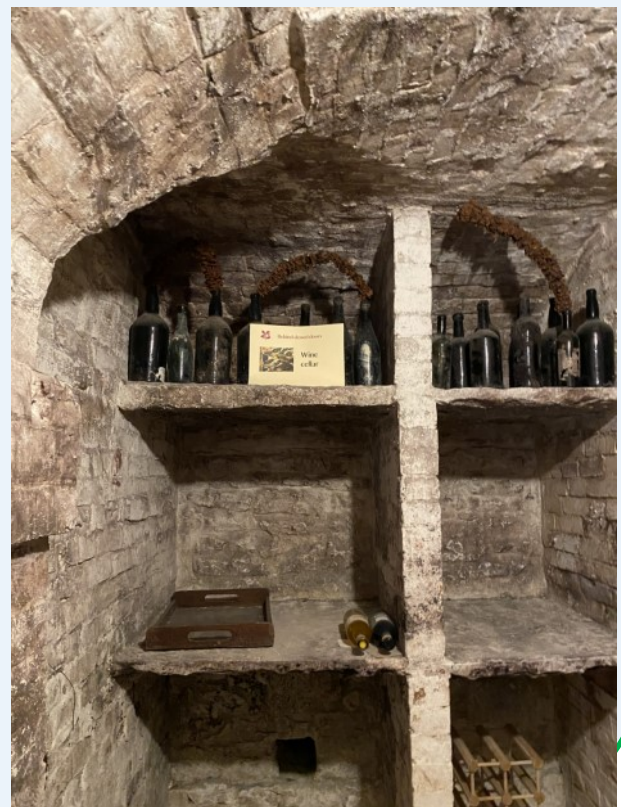
Housekeeper's Room.—This Flue has three Soot Doors, the two doors outside of Library, and one under the roof of Library must be opened when the Chimney is Climbed, as the Flue runs horizontally where the door under the roof is fixed, and it would be impossible to get out the soot without opening this door. The outlet of the Flue from the Preserving Room is in the same spot as the Flue in the Library, and it is the Flue nearest the roof.

Kitchen.—*This Chimney has two Flues, but the one on the right side of the fire-place can be used or not, as there is a Soot Door to it at the commencement to the Flue, and it is requisite that both these Flues should be Swept once in three weeks when the family is there, and once a month when the family is away. The other Flues when in constant use should be swept once in two months.

N.B.—All other Chimneys that are not mentioned in this list should be Climbed for Cleaning, as some of them are very large, and others crooked.

N.B.—These directions have been found necessary, having had some of the Flues on fire from not being properly swept, and others full of soot from the same cause, and after a careful examination being made by efficient people from London, who have examined all the Flues by Climbing, and found these directions absolutely necessary to be strictly followed out to prevent smoke, and danger by fire. When the Chimneys are Swept, it is the order of Sir H. HOARE, that the Butler, and Housekeeper see that these Rules are strictly attended to by the Sweep in every particular.

N.B.—*The Flue not in use on the South side of Library Flue, at top is in two parts, one half goes down about six feet, the other half outside, next garden, goes down to Basement in Room adjoining Preserving Room, the fire-place of this latter is bricked up.



Group News

Craft Group

In March the Craft group enjoyed making cards with a big choice of colourful fabrics ...the manual sewing machines were fun to use too, although some of us found threading the needle tricky!

Many thanks to the Group member who led the session.

All Su3a members are invited to take part in a collaborative piece of work to celebrate the Coronation:

Make a 2D crown in any medium, no bigger than postcard size please, eg paint, pen and ink, knitted, textiles, beadwork, card, marquetry etc. The finished pieces will be mounted on a card to display at Open days etc (if you wish to have your work returned please let me know).

Any contributions welcome please! The pieces can be cut out as crowns, or on a circular or square background. Please give to Amanda before the Coronation lunch if possible, or on the day.

Amanda



SUBS playing at North Petherton for the PO and BT pensioners who sang along with gusto!

The **Recorder group** entertaining with an ambitious program of music and an appreciative audience! Dec 22



Nationally u3a are running a competition searching for an original recipe that celebrates Britain in 2023. The deadline is 10th April; full details on the (national) u3a website .

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/cook-for-the-king>



How Well Do You Know Agatha Christie?

1. Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple are Agatha Christie's most famous detectives, but she also created a host of other mystery solvers. Which of the following is NOT a Christie detective?

- a) Tuppence Beresford
- b) Roger Ackroyd
- c) Harley Quin
- d) Parker Pyne

2. How many murders did Miss Marple solve?

- a) 3
- b) 36
- c) 47
- d) 102

3. How many cups of tea did she drink over the 12 novels and 20 short stories in which she appears?

- a) 22
- b) 68
- c) 143
- d) 212

4. Which Guinness world record does Christie hold?

- a) Oldest novelist to have had a book published
- b) Most murders in her novels
- c) World's bestselling novelist
- d) Novelist most frequently adapted for TV

5. Under what name did Christie write general fiction?

- a) Mary Wesley
- b) Mary Westmacott
- c) L C Fisher
- d) Georgina McCullagh

6. What happened to Christie in December 1926?

- a) She disappeared for 11 days
- b) She was acclaimed by the press for solving a real-life murder in her local village

7. How many manuscripts were rejected before her first novel was accepted?

- a) 2
- b) 4
- c) 6
- d) 8

8. What was the occupation of her second husband?

- a) Writer
- b) Lawyer
- c) Archaeologist
- d) Military Officer

9. What is the name of her summer house on the River Dart?

- a) Styles
- b) Greenway
- c) Charterhouse
- d) Final Moorings

10. What decade (even better year) did Agatha Christie die?

- a) 1950s
- b) 1960s
- c) 1970s
- d) 1980s



Thank you Mary Beth for this Quiz...editor

Please send all articles for the Newsletter to the editor

mike.davis@silchester.org

Deadline for the May edition...20th April

Pictures welcome, but keep script brief

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