

# SOMERTON u3a

## Newsletter 39

July 2023



## Chairman's message

Welcome to the July Newsletter, and what is turning out to be a glorious spell of summer weather (but please bear in mind that I'm writing this at the end of June, so fingers crossed!). It is when, belonging to one of our outdoor Groups such as Local Discovery, Garden Visits, Birdwatching, Walking or many of the other Groups that are available to our members that can get out and about, really come into their own.

If you would like to spend a bit more time outdoors – and promote our u3a, then please consider getting in touch with our Secretary, Annette Sparks. On Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July our u3a is taking part in the Somerton Community Day, being held on the Sports Field between 12.30 – 5.00pm. The afternoon will be one of socialising, having fun, promoting our organisation – and smiling! This is an excellent opportunity to get local people to know about u3a, who we are and what we offer. If you think you can help for an hour, please get in touch with Annette.

Our Monthly Meetings are another good place to meet together and make new friends, and it was good to see so many of you at the June meeting. Although our booked speaker was unable to attend, David Robins rescued the situation at the last moment and we welcomed Mary Braddock, showing us her wonderful wildlife photographs, and look forward to hearing David Boag in November instead.

I hope to meet more of you at the next meeting – (thank you to the newer members who come up and introduce yourselves) and in the meantime, enjoy your u3a – and have fun!

Steve

PS We are having our next Committee Meeting on the 13th July so if any member has an issue that they would like to raise, they are welcome to send it to the Secretary or any member of the committee up to a week beforehand.

Secretary Annette email: [annettes2853@gmail.com](mailto:annettes2853@gmail.com)

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# Monthly meetings and talks

*Monthly meetings are held on the 4th. Friday of the month at the Edgar Community Hall, Somerton.*

*We open at 10am for refreshments and the chance for members to meet and chat.*

*The refreshments will finish at 10.20 in order to clear away before the meeting.*

*The meeting starts at 10.30 with notices, announcements and any other business and will be followed by our guest speaker.*

*The meeting closes at 12 noon.*

*Please join us. Visitors are always welcome at our meetings for a small charge of £2 so please come along and see who we are and what we are about. If you are visiting for the first time then please just make yourself know to one of our Committee members or 'Welcomers' who will be happy to tell you a little bit about us and help you feel at home.*

Don't forget to bring your stamps for the Dorset & Somerset air ambulance

## 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

## Fri Aug 25th

*Enrolment Day...more on page 3*

## Fri Sep 22nd

*Roger Browne Jazz pianist*

### About the speaker

Roger has spoken to our u3a before - but on Zoom. We hope to have him with us in person this time.

## Fri Feb 23rd 2024

*The Origins Of Modern Art*

This talk explores the critical and contextual elements of the fundamental shifts in Art from the early 19th to the early 20th centuries.

*Speaker - Wayne Spilsbury*

### About the speaker.

'I am a professional contemporary artist working in a range of genres and media. I am based in Bruton and have exhibited around the country as well as participating in Somerset Open Studios.

Most notably I have enjoyed a



highly successful career in art education for over 40 years, running secondary school art and art history departments; tutoring to students and adults in colleges; participating in teacher training with UWE and examining. I have organised numerous art visits to galleries in the UK and around the world. I retired from teaching recently but am still an examiner with two boards.'

## Social Events

**Fri Dec 8th**

**Christmas Lunch**

# Group News

## Enrolment Day Friday 25<sup>th</sup> August

This could be a morning of many great opportunities for everyone.

Groups will be displaying what they have been doing this year and recruiting new members into their group.

All members, new and old, can review what they do with their Membership of Somerton u3a. Is there something new to be explored?

We hope to offer several new groups.

Free coffee and chat with friends, old and new, throughout the morning.

There will be more details about the morning in the August Newsletter.

In the meantime, I am looking for suggestions for new groups and volunteers to lead these new groups or take over leadership of existing groups where the leaders may want to step down after many years.

Somerton u3a cannot run itself without volunteers for the Committee and to run groups. Some of our Group Leaders have been doing the job for 10 years or more. Maybe they need a rest, a well-earned second or third retirement.

That is not meant to be a threat, you would retire whenever the time is right for you. But please think about what you could offer to keep Somerton u3a the vibrant, happy organization we know and love

Please contact Jane Redgrove, Group coordinator, for more information or to volunteer. [groups@somertonu3a.uk](mailto:groups@somertonu3a.uk)



# Group News

## Blooming Lovely!



Members of the **Garden Visits Group** are used to visiting stunning gardens featured in the NGS Open Gardens Scheme but this month, they had an extra special treat as 6 members volunteered to open their own gardens in Somerton for viewing.



A very wet spring and the recent prolonged period of hot weather ensured that the plants and flowers in every garden was a delightful visual feast of colour, shape and form.



Proud owners showed off their creations whilst explaining their ideas and choices of design and planting.

Ideas were freely swapped, and heads often scratched when botanical names momentarily eluded treacherous memories.



Each garden was so different; what they all had in common though was the owners' very evident enjoyment of their gardens and the satisfaction gained after many hours of toil.



A big thank you goes to the brave members who volunteered their gardens, to Annette for baking the delicious cakes and, not least to Jane, the group leader, who organised the logistics.

As the event was such a success, Jane would like to repeat it next year and is already on the hunt for more potential open gardens.



Would you be interested in opening yours?

Kay

# Group News

Earlier in the year Stephen Honey, English Heritage, came to a **Local History Group** meeting to give as a fascinating talk about the history of Muchelney Abbey.

We were all so engaged by the talk that on a very hot day in June the group paid a private visit to the Abbey. Stephen was able to bring his talk to life as we stood in the ruins and toured the interior of the remaining building.

We even managed to have a picnic in the grounds and then off to visit the church and then the Priest House owned by the National Trust. A busy but very enjoyable day out and all so local to Somerton.

*Judi*



## Invitation to a Talk from the Local History Group

**Judi and Kay, organisers of the Local History group, would like to invite the wider Su3a membership to join us for a talk on Wednesday 19th July from Joseph Lewis, Heritage Coordinator for the South Somerset Heritage Collection in Yeovil, entitled 'Somerton and Further Afield'.**

On his first visit to the group earlier this year, Joseph brought along several interesting artefacts from the museum's collection to enhance his talk about the history of Somerton.

Joseph says of his upcoming talk,

" I am returning with more Somerton connections, plus links to the surrounding villages.

These include Langport and Oliver Chalker, the strong man of Keinton Mandeville, plus other intriguing stories along the way".

*Please do come and join us; you will be warmly welcomed and we know you will find it very interesting .*

Date: Wednesday 19th July

Time: 10am for 10.30am

Venue: Parish Rooms, Somerton

Admission: £3, to include coffee/tea and biscuits



.....and from su3a facebook



**Somerton u3a Facebook**

<https://m.facebook.com/people/Somerton-u3a/100070538943417/>



# Group News

A small group of **Local History Group** Members set off for Tyntesfield to not only enjoy the wonderful house and grounds, but to see the Red Dress Exhibition.

The Red Dress project features ONE dress that has been embroidered on by 380 people in 31 countries around

the world over the course of 13 years. It is an amazing sight and was highly recommended by the group. It is believed that the exhibition will return to Somerton at some time later in the year.

*Judi*



## Scarce Swallowtail



Whilst on holiday in Kos at the beginning of June I snapped a picture of this beautiful butterfly in the grounds of our holiday apartment. It was taken using my phone and I couldn't even really see what I was photographing. I was so surprised when I reviewed it to see how good it was – well I thought so anyway!!

Although it is known as a Scarce Swallowtail it is only scarce in the UK but is a protected species in a number of Eastern European countries.

I thought I would share it with you all – hope you enjoy it.

*Liz Short*

*I think this is a Hawk Moth !  
Judi*



## Editors message

A lot of you are probably thinking the content this month concentrates a lot on the Local History Group....that's right because I received it...thank you.

Tell me about your group and throw in a few pictures....I would love to hear from you!

Mike

## Somerton u3a

### Committee Members 2023/2024

Chairman	Steve Davis
Vice Chairman	Jane Redgrove
Secretary	Annette Sparks
Treasurer	Liz Short
Fran Cook	Membership Secretary
Mike Davis	Newsletter Editor
Amanda Hooper	Events Co-ordinator
Laurence Reeves	Beacon Administrator
David Robins	Speaker Co-ordinator
Sarah Terry	Committee Member



☺ *Everyone in u3a should be an involved member, not a customer being served* ☺

## Somerton u3a website

If you require more information concerning entries in this newsletter or other points of interest, take a look at the Somerton u3a website, address below.

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

***Please send all articles for the Newsletter to the editor***

***mike.davis@silchester.org***

***Deadline for the August edition...20th July***

*Pictures welcome, but keep script brief*

*Minimum formatting please.*