

SOMERTON u3a

Newsletter 40 August 2023



Chairman's message

Welcome to our Monthly Newsletter. As many of you may be experiencing right now, with younger relatives and friends, August can be a very busy time for them! Not only are they possibly thinking about holidays (may be even visiting you?) but there is preparation to be done for the start of the new 'academic year'.

Members of Somerton u3a may be no different. This month's meeting will be our Enrolment and Open Day, to which all members are invited. It is a chance for Groups to showcase what is on offer and a chance for members to sign on again, to their Groups, or maybe try something new?

Our u3a has a lot of varied opportunities for you so, if you feel like learning something new, getting a little bit more active, joining some of the Groups that go out on visits and explore new places near and far, or maybe just come to the Monthly Meeting and hear the wide range of speakers we have arranged for the coming year, then please join us. Why not introduce a friend to u3a? Mike Davis has emailed an advertising poster to all members that you can print off and display. New members are guaranteed a warm welcome and, with new members we get new ideas and new opportunities.

Enjoy the summer, see you soon – and have fun!

Steve

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August

by Mary B. C. Slade

*I come! I come! and the waving field
Its wealth of golden grain shall yield.
In the hush and heat of glowing noon,*

*The insects' hum is the only tune;
For the merriest birds forget to sing,
And sit in the shade with drooping wing*

Monthly meetings and talks

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

We are open from **9.30am** 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 and coins for the Dorset & Somerset air ambulance

Enrolment Day

25th August 2023

Edgar Hall, Somerton

10.00 – 12.00

There will be information about more than 50 interest groups.

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

Sunday Roasties.

July 2nd saw The Sunday Roasties assemble with eager anticipation outside The Globe. At 12 noon promptly the doors opened and we were made welcome. The staff were very friendly and helpful.

Organiser John Day was unable to join us having a musical appointment elsewhere. Bill stepped up to the mark and ensured our host had numbers ahead of time so the table was all set for 11 of us in the room adjacent to the conservatory.

The food was good - from roasts to curry, veggie tart and more. The portions were so generous that only a few managed desserts. Coffees rounded the meal off nicely.

Sarah Terry

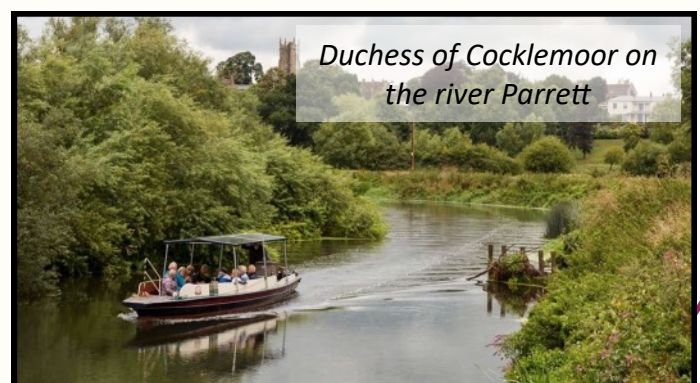


'Three Men in a Boat' and a proposed River Trip

The plan for this month's meeting of the **Reading Group** was to enjoy a tranquil picnic by the river whilst discussing 'Three Men in a Boat' and then cruise gently up the river Parrett aboard The Duchess of Cocklemoor.

However, fully in keeping with Jerome K Jerome's story, the English weather had other ideas..... So, whilst picnic and boat trip had to be postponed, we still met in Langport on a blustery afternoon, but settled for tea and cake in a riverside café. Jerome George and Carl (not to mention Montmorency) would have approved we think!

Mary-Beth Greenop



Duchess of Cocklemoor on the river Parrett

Group News

Tales of Bygone Somerset

Last month the Local History group welcomed a return visit from Joseph Lewis for more tales of Somerton and the surrounding area, its history and its characters.

We were delighted that so many Somerton u3a members were able to join us for such an entertaining and knowledgeable presentation.

The talk was accompanied by slides of original photos and artefacts from the Somerset Heritage Collection in Yeovil, where Joseph is the coordinator.

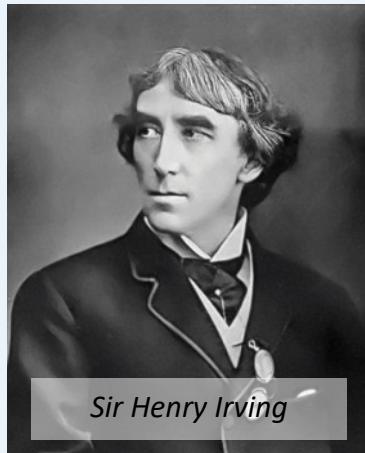
One of the exhibits Joseph had chosen to bring along was a booklet entitled, "New Railway" written by Margaret Tiffin, one of the original leaders of the Local History group.

It was so interesting to see photos of Somerton in the late 19th and early 20th century, particularly looking west towards the Triangle, so familiar and yet different.

Photos taken of the Somerton viaduct being built just before the turn of the 20th century, show just what a major piece of engineering it was.

The talk took a gothic turn when Joseph talked about Sir Henry Irving, the Victorian actor/manager, who was born in Keinton Mandeville.

The Irish author, Bram Stoker, who wrote Dracula in 1897, was Irving's



Sir Henry Irving

business manager for 28 years at the Lyceum Theatre in London. Although it is generally agreed that Stoker based the character of Dracula on the real-life Romanian ruler, Vlad Tepes, known as Vlad the Impaler, his inspiration may have been closer to his own life. Irving has been described as an egotist, a striking, mesmerising figure and a demanding employer.

Contemporaries noted the physical similarities to Irving in the novel's description of Dracula, a strong aquiline nose with a high bridge of a nose and peculiarly arched nostrils – a lofty domed forehead – massive eyebrows, almost meeting over the nose and profuse bushy hair.

Any hopes that Stoker entertained that Irving might play the titular character in any future

stage production of Dracula were dashed as Irving hated it.

Did he recognise himself in the book?

Looking at this photo of Irving, he does seem to be a good model for how many of us would imagine Dracula would look.

What do you think?

Kay

Local History Co-leader



West Street, looking towards the Triangle



Broad Street



New Street

Ships and Boat Quiz

True or False?



1. A Frenchwoman, Jeanne de Clisson, became a pirate in the 1300s to revenge her husband's death who was beheaded. She sold her lands to buy 3 ships. They were painted black with red sails. She hunted French ships and caught nobles, whom she personally beheaded with an axe.
2. There is a Royal Navy superstition that whistling on a ship can summon strong winds. Traditionally, the only person allowed to whistle is the ship's cook, as it means he's not eating the food.
3. In 2004, a party yacht tipped over when the passengers all moved to one side of the boat as it passed a nude beach in Texas.
4. There is an old abandoned Russian cruise ship roaming international waters since 2013.
5. In 1812, an American ship rescued a British crew stranded on an island. While the Americans went out to search for food for the extra crew, the British took over the ship and left the Americans stranded on the island.
6. A man who survived the fire and sinking of a ship in 1871, was left emotionally scarred. About 41 years later, he finally was able to overcome his fears and nightmares, deciding to sail again, only to die in the sinking of a new ship, the Titanic.
7. Chunosuke Matsuyama, a Japanese Seamen, sent a message in a bottle in 1784 that his ship had wrecked. It washed up in 1935 in the village where he was born.
8. During WW2, a Dutch warship was disguised as a tropical island to escape detection by the Japanese. It was the only ship of its class to survive.
9. In 2004, a study was published showing that retiring to a cruise ship was often as cost-effective as retiring to a retirement home and was more effective in providing quality of life.
10. Quarantine, comes from the Latin word for 40, which was the number of days a ship had to wait to dock because of the plague.



11. Steamboat Willie was the first Disney cartoon with sound, released on November 18, 1928, which is thus celebrated as Mickey Mouse's birthday.

Mary-Beth Greenop

.....and from su3a Facebook



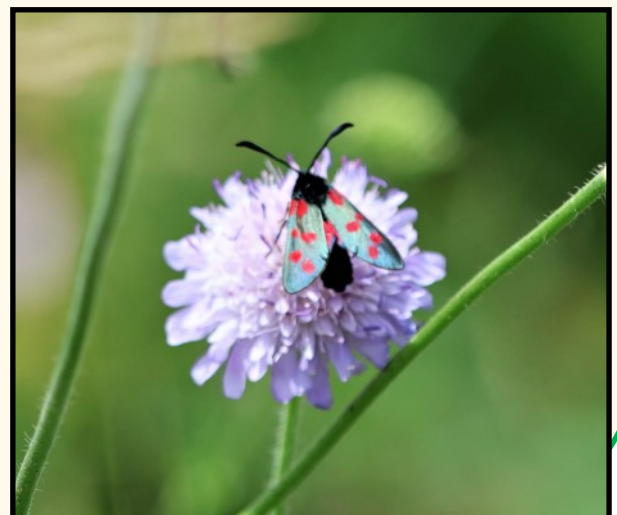
The Local History Group were at Wraxall's Vineyard today. A wonderful tour and amazing "tasting's " plus a very enjoyable lunch with great company. Thank you all for making the day such fun...Judi Powell



The Local Discovery Group discovered Montacute Village ...Sarah Terry



A lovely morning out looking at flowers, grasses, insects and anything else at this wonderful place. Thanks to our resident expert David Perkins, for guiding us through...Steve Davis



Somerton u3a Facebook

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

Publicity

Somerton u3a

Enrolment Day

25th August 2023

at

Edgar Hall, Somerton

10.00 – 12.00

Come and see what the u3a can offer you

There will be information about over 50 interest groups
which are available to our members.

Join Somerton u3a

Further information

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

Membership enquiries:

membership@somertonu3a.uk

Further information:

groups@somertonu3a.uk

Welfare Officer

I am the member of Somerton U3A responsible for membership but under this umbrella also comes responsibility for welfare of members.



This means that any member who is facing difficulties of any sort, illness, or bereavement etc will have the support of the u3a in whatever way is possible.

Please do not hesitate to ask for help and we will do our best!

Fran Cook

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 September edition...20th August

Pictures welcome, but keep script brief

Minimum formatting please.