

SOMERTON u3a

Newsletter 44

December 2023



Chairman's message



This past year has been a time of mixed emotions for our u3a, as we have seen the passing of several present and former members of our organisation, but I know that they will be remembered by us all at what will be, for their relatives and friends, a very poignant time.

This year has also had a lot of positives. Our membership has increased, we have had celebrations, we have been on holidays, held dances, enjoyed outings, visits, meetings, speakers, lunches – and lunches – and more lunches, and enjoyed each other's friendship and companionship.

None of this comes without a lot of effort and I would like to give my thanks to the Committee for all their hard work over the year in the many varied roles they undertake. Of course, it isn't just Committee members who are working in the background, we have the Group Leaders, the RUGS, and all the other members who help in so many ways, to make our u3a run smoothly. It could not happen without you.

May I take this opportunity to wish everyone of you a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.



Steve

Chairman Su3a



Dear members of Somerton u3a.....

What events would you like to enjoy in 2024?

Please send ideas to editor or write down and bring to coffee morning.

Monthly meetings and talks

Monthly meetings are held on the fourth 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 known 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

Friday 8th December Christmas lunch

Just a reminder, if you're coming to the lunch doors will open at 12.00, in time for you to buy a raffle ticket and maybe buy a drink (water will be on the tables).

Please enter by the rear entrance (from the car park go to the right of the building then bear left), where you will be checked in.

The lunch will be served from 12.30.

Thanking the Recorder group who will be playing whilst coffee is served, and also thanking Sue and SUBS who will be concluding the afternoon with Christmas songs 🎵. We expect to finish by 4.15.

A big thank you also to Liz who has collated the information on impressive spreadsheets and Gig for sourcing some great raffle prizes.

Amanda

Friday 26th January 2024

Kay Townsend

'Fairgrounds at war 1939 to 1945'

.....further details to follow.

Friday 23rd February 2024

Wayne Spilsbury

'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.

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."

Fri 22nd March 2024

Mike Denham

Jazz Pianist

Fri Apr 26th 2024

Michael Malahon

"Can you hear me at the back??"

“ Everyone in u3a should be an involved member, not a customer being served ”



Group News



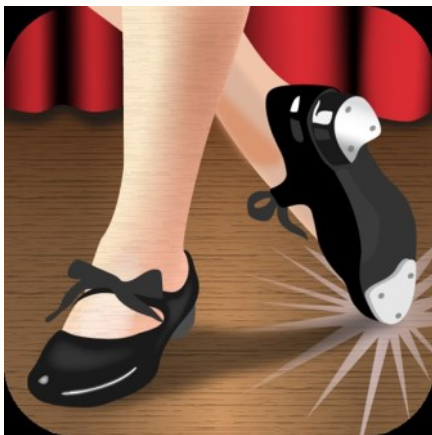
Reading Group meets Author!

Earlier this year we read 'Songbirds' by Christy Lefteri. It is a moving story of personal loss and healing set around the difficult subject of entrapment and modern slavery in present day Cyprus.

Four members of the group were able to attend a talk by Christy who was promoting her latest book as part of the Yeovil Literary Festival. She was engaging and honest about the effects of being a refugee in the UK (her father was a serving Greek officer during the Cyprus war and left shortly afterwards) and how it has driven her to highlight the plight of others caught up in displacement and conflict.



We intend to read 'The Book of Fire' next year.



u3a Tap Dancing Group *Tamra Mumby*

Tap Dancing is moving to Tuesday mornings from 9th January 2024.

Sessions will take place at 10.30-11.30am, in the West Street Church Room.

We are a small, enthusiastic and friendly group of tap dancers. Why not come a join us?

The first session is aimed at beginners to cover the basic steps we learnt in the autumn.

For more information, contact Tamra Mumby Email: tamramumby@hotmail.com

The **Merry Widows** is a new group being set up in Somerton to support ladies who are widowed.

We plan to meet up in the White Hart for coffee and a chat on a regular basis. Various activities may follow on from the meetings as ideas are agreed. The first meeting will be on Tuesday 2nd January at 10.30 am.

Further details may be obtained from Dru Perry on 07799 262047 or perrydruscilla@gmail.com



Group News

Good Times with the Local History Group...part 1

The Local History Group continues to grow with currently over 67 on the membership list and we are meeting twice a month, with 38 attending our latest coffee and cake morning.

The first visit to the Somerset Brick and Tile Museum in Bridgwater was so popular that we arranged another visit later in the month.



The interior of the museum showing the variety of objects



Members learnt of the dreadful conditions endured by workers, including children as young as 8, during the late Victorian and early 20th century. At the height of brick production, there were 16 works in Bridgwater, this one being the last in existence.

Large photos covering the walls of the museum set the scene as Marie, the curator, told us what life would have been like for the workers and the processes involved in brick and tile making at the time.

The tour seemed to awake very many personal memories for our members.

"The chemistry of the technology was interesting, the Victorian marketing was very thorough but for me, the interesting part was the social history."

Dave P

"It took me back to the brick works in Portishead. I was forbidden but used to play in there but got found out

when my Mum caught me washing my shoes in the water butt."

Maureen L

"I was amazed by the variety of objects in a small museum."

Maureen B

"I was shocked at the appalling conditions for the workers, even children."

Sylvia

More next month

A week on the Helgrim...really?

Yes, astonishingly, I did win a week's cruise for two on the river Douro (courtesy of Viking Cruises) through entering a competition in 'Third Age Matters'. So, off went my husband and I via Gatwick, Lisbon and Porto to a warm welcome on board the 'Helgrim'. For a week we were able to enjoy a smart stateroom (cabin), the services of a friendly and competent crew, interesting talks and entertainment, excellent cuisine and six

included excursions (not compulsory!) Fellow travellers were 80% congenial American retirees. The scenery was impressive. We visited (among other things) the 'Mateus Rose Palace' and two wine estates. I really had not appreciated that Portugal boasted so very many terraces for growing vines or olives, accessed by roads with multiple hairpin bends! Weather – cool, showery, with occasional sunshine. Well, it was November...

All in all, a surprise holiday to remember with a smile!

Mary Madgwick



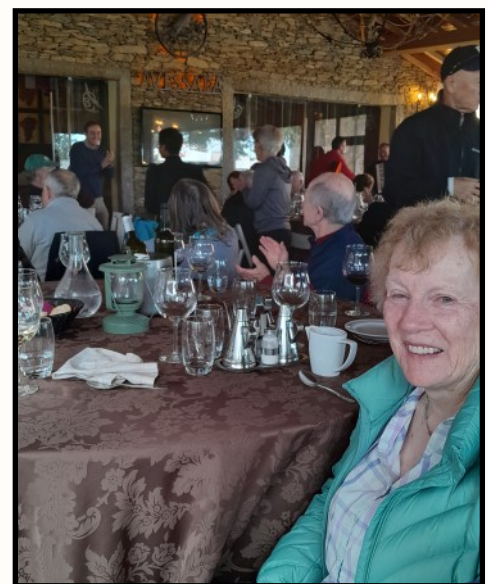
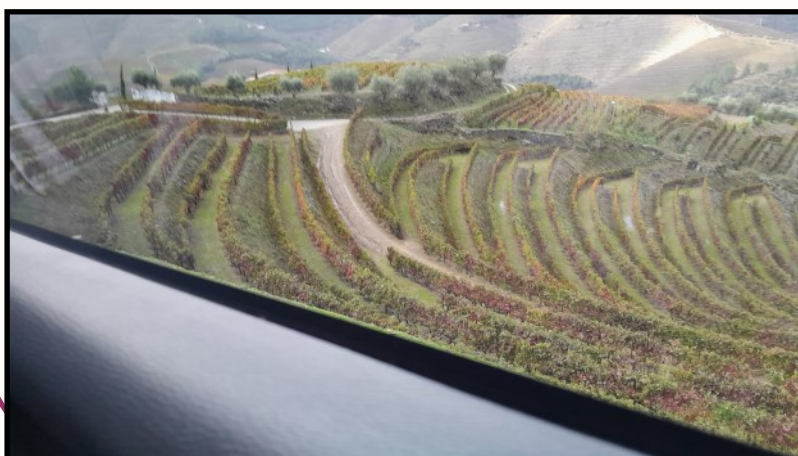
Morning view from our stateroom over the Douro



Mary and husband Peter



View of Porto from the 'Helgrim'.



The end of an excursion!

Vinyard terraces viewed from the coach.

Parade

I'm a little pine tree
As you can see,
All the other pine trees
Are bigger than me.
Maybe when I grow up
Then I'll be
A great big merry Christmas tree!

– unknown



Merry
Christmas

Somerton Gardening Club talk

Somerton Gardening Club have invited Charles Dowding the well-known authority on 'no dig gardening' to give a talk at the Edgar Hall on the 8th February at 7.30pm. If you are keen to improve your garden soil and grow organic vegetables then please join us.

Tickets for the talk and refreshments are available for £10 from Annette Sparks (Secretary) on 01458 258947



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.

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

Please send all articles for the Newsletter to the editor

mike.davis@silchester.org

Deadline for the January edition...20th December

Pictures welcome, but keep script brief

Minimum formatting please.