

SOMERTON u3a

Newsletter 46 February 2024



Chairman's message

Somerton u3a, like u3as everywhere, from our beginning to the present day, rely on the generosity of our members to give up some time and volunteer. It's what got us going in the first place, with our founding members willingness to take on jobs, and is still very much an essential part in keeping Su3a going, whether it be taking an active role in our Groups, leading a Group, or just helping in any way we can, be it big or small, with the smooth running of the day-to-day events. All this makes for a happy experience.

However, (and there is always a 'however') as valuable as all the areas in which we can volunteer are, there are certain jobs that *have* to be done to fulfil our legal obligations. The Committee Members are all Trustees of our u3a and without certain roles being filled we cannot legally operate. Since returning on to the Committee in 2022, I have had the privilege of working with some remarkable people who have made my life very much easier with the job they do and, at this point, I shall break the sad news (to members of our u3a at least!) that Liz Short is leaving Somerton, to live in Essex.

Liz, who was already in post as Treasurer in 2022, has been remarkable. She has transformed the way the accounts are handled, built up a great relationship with the Group Leaders, whose money she handles, simplified the way in which we deal with joining fees and the funding of our events, produced accurate and informative reports at every Committee meeting and presented easy to understand reports at our AGMs. On top of this, and this is perhaps the most remarkable thing of all – she really enjoys it!

We will be sad to see Liz go but I'm sure I speak for all of us in wishing her well in the future. In her usual efficient manner, Liz has agreed to see us through to the end of the financial year, has arranged a replacement 'volunteer' to take over her role and found another 'volunteer' to be our financial Independent Examiner.

Liz has told me that when she is settled in her new home, she will seek out her local u3a and probably volunteer for something – what a great example!

Good luck and thank you, from us all.

Steve

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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 23rd February

SS Great Britain: from launch to 're-launch'

By Ian Caskie

In building SS Great Britain, the second of his three great ships, Brunel successfully combined and adapted the very best of cutting-edge technologies to create the world's first transatlantic liner – a true wonder of the Victorian age.

She was the first ocean-going steamship with an iron hull, and the first driven by a propeller. This extraordinary ship, launched in 1843 as the largest and fastest afloat, transformed shipbuilding and sea travel for ever.



Our Speaker

Ian was born and raised on Merseyside, where he spent many an hour watching the arrivals and departures at Liverpool's busy Pier Head in the 1950s and 60s. This led to his lifelong passion for ships – especially ocean liners. He was a Primary Headteacher and School Improvement Adviser in Bristol for many years, and has been a Visitor Experience volunteer and tour guide with the SS Great Britain Trust since 2007.

Ian's enthusiasm for his subject is clearly evidenced in his illustrated talk which tells the ship's remarkable story from her original design through the different phases of her working life. It also describes life on board and her incredible salvage and return to Bristol in 1970, and finally her restoration, preservation and 're-launch' as a multi-award winning museum of international renown.

We are grateful to Ian for stepping in at short notice, due to our advertised speaker, Wayne Spilsbury on 'The Origins of Modern Art' being unavailable.

Friday 22nd March 2024

A talk by Mike Denham

accompanied on the keyboard

Jazz Pianist

1924 was a big year for piano music. Ragtime was giving way to its younger cousin, jazz, and the careers of young pianists like Fats Waller, Jelly Roll Morton, James P Johnson and Duke Ellington took big strides forward. Mike will talk about some of the events which surrounded the music, and illustrate at the keyboard some of the new piano styles of a century ago.

Friday 26th April

Michael Malahon

"Can you hear me at the back??"

Friday 24th May

Somerton u3a AGM

Friday 28th June

Alex Ledger

"I bet this never happened to you"

Friday 26th July

Richard Benjamin and or Sarah Hayward from Silverline legal..

'Legacy the fortress for generations'

Group News

Good Times with the Local History Group Part 3

Very different in atmosphere was our second building we visited, the very distinctive Victorian gothic style Market House in the centre of Castle Cary. Our guide this time was Pet, joint owner of The Old House

Built in 1856, in anticipation of increased trade from the building of the railway line, its primary function was to provide accommodation for the sale of corn, cheese, butter, milk, vegetables and other produce. The undercroft, still enclosed by the railings, was for the market, particularly for corn. Behind that was The Shambles for livestock and at the rear, there were 2 cells.

The building, however, was not a success as trade dwindled and it fell into disrepair. Extensive renovations of The Market House were completed in 2014 and internal and external areas can now be hired for community and commercial use. The committee are currently seeking planning approval for further improvements.

On the first floor, but currently closed until Spring 2024, is Castle Cary Museum which contains a large collection of domestic and agricultural implements, archaeological and historical information and artefacts. Pet was able to show us round, pointing out significant and important items and documents.

The last word from one of our members on a very interesting day,

“A very good tour of Castle Cary, shown round by 2 people who were both knowledgeable and enthusiastic.”

Mark P



We finished the month with a coffee morning in the Parish Rooms where members brought along a variety of antique objects including a George 11 2d piece, a footwarmer for stagecoach passengers in its own case, a piece of metal with a crest on dug up from the garden and a variety of guidebooks to the local area written in the last 50 years.

Currently, Judi and I are working on the programme for 2024, a mixture of outside visits to places well known and not so well known. There are also meetings in Somerton Parish Rooms where we host excellent speakers and coffee mornings.

If you wish to join us, you will be assured of a warm welcome, good company and hot drinks, plus delicious cake.

*Kay
Co-leader of the
Local History Group*

Details of places visited:-

Somerset Brick and Tile Museum
East Quay
Bridgwater
TA6 4DB
Open Tuesdays 10am to 4pm
Suggested donation, £3 pp

The Old House Cockhill
Castle Cary
BA7 7NZ
Open some Sunday afternoons 3-4pm
by arrangement
Booking essential, small admission
charge
Please phone/email well in advance
house@medievalbarn.co.uk
01963 351288

The Market House
Market Place
Castle Cary
BA7 7AH
Museum reopens April 2024

Group News

Scrabble Group



The Striders Walking Group had their first walk of 2024 on 12th January.

Terry and Emma led us around the footpaths and lanes of Curry Rivel. A very enjoyable, and not too muddy, walk followed by a coffee at The Firehouse.

Paul Redman



How to spot a fraudulent scam

Ask yourself the following questions.

If you answer yes to any of them, there's a good chance it is a scam.

Have you been contacted unexpectedly?

Cold calls or unexpected emails or messages should raise suspicion, especially if you're asked to give personal or payment details. It's very unusual for legitimate organizations to contact you and ask for sensitive information if you're not expecting them to. If you're not 100% convinced about the identity of the caller, hang up and contact the company directly.

Have you been asked to share personal details?

Never share your details with anyone if you can't establish they are who they say they are. Scammers will often try and get valuable personal information from you, and they can use this to steal your money, or even to steal your identity. You should also be wary of anyone who asks you to pay unusually. i.e. cryptocurrency.

Are the contact details unclear?

Scam websites often have vague contact details. Remember that legitimate companies will have a place of business, phone number, or email address to contact them. Sometimes scammers also use premium rate numbers (starting '09') to squeeze every penny they can out of you.

Are you being asked to keep it secret from others?

It's important to discuss any agreements with your friends, family, or advisors as outside perspectives can provide valuable voices of reason. Fraudsters use grooming techniques including isolating you so that you don't tell anyone about the situation you're in and fall deeper into the scam. Asking you to keep quiet is a way to keep you away from the advice and support you need in making a decision.

Is the offer almost too good to believe?

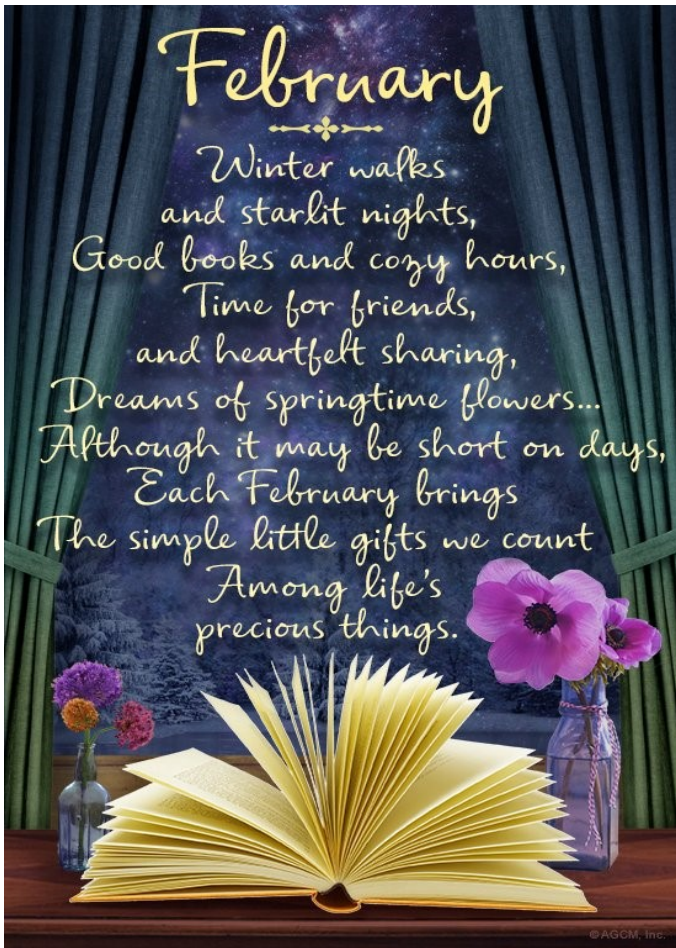
Scams will often promise high returns for very little financial commitment. They may even say that a deal is too good to miss. Use your common sense, if a deal seems too good to be true, it inevitably is.

Are you asked to make a quick decision?

Fraudsters often try to hurry your decision-making. Don't let anyone make you feel under pressure - it's OK to take a break and think things through if you're not sure. It's also a common technique for scammers to use a countdown timer on scam websites to pile on further pressure. Genuine companies should always give you time and space to make an informed decision - anyone who tries to rush you should not be trusted.

Are there spelling and/or grammatical errors?

Emails or messages littered with spelling and grammar mistakes are a scam giveaway. Legitimate organizations will rarely, if ever, make spelling or grammatical mistakes in their emails to you because they've been put together by professionals and spell-checked before they're sent.



Somerton u3a Committee Members 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

"I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now"

Bob Dylan

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 March edition...20th February

Pictures welcome, but keep script brief

Minimum formatting please.