

WELCOME EVERYONE

Wonderful News.

We now have a Chairman to be voted to the position at the AGM on 11th March, so I hope as many of you as will be able to attend will come along to vote, and to meet and greet our new leader. A big thank you must be said to Janet who has so ably led us for the past 4 years, growing our membership to over 700 people and in guiding the committee so well. We wish her a well earned rest.

Newsletter Articles

A reminder that any articles for the newsletter must be received by 23rd of each month. Group news should be sent via the Group Coordinators in plenty of time:

A-L groups to Angie at groupsal@sidmouthu3a.org and

M-Z groups to Amanda at roupsmz@sidmouthu3a.org

Thank You and Kind Regards. Francetta Bridle - newslettereditor@sidmouthu3a.org

Chairman's Message

It gives me great pleasure to introduce your new Chairman (subject to election by the membership at the AGM). Gail Richmond joined Sidmouth u3a 4 years ago when she moved here with her husband Jack from Dartmouth. As part of Dartmouth u3a Gail was Chairman for over four years so she is experienced in the role. I hope you will join me in welcoming Gail to her new role after the election in March.

Other roles that you have the opportunity to fill are Vice-Chair, joint Groups Coordinator, working with Angie to help and assist our Group Leaders. Front of House Manager helping with the monthly meetings at Stowford. Speaker Finder, working to find speakers for our monthly meetings from 2026 onwards, we are fully booked for the remainder of 2025.

Many thanks to our outgoing committee members, Amanda Haste, Jan Moorhouse and Norma Pearce for their time on the committee and for helping Sidmouth u3a continue its success. And of course, thank you to Vera who will be standing down as Treasurer at the AGM and welcome to Lesley who will be taking over (subject to election by the membership). Welcome also, to Jackie Cox who joined the committee last month as our Social Committee Chair.

We also need a few general committee members. I hope you will consider spending some time on the committee to help with the general running of this amazing organisation. Remember, u3a is run for the members, by the members.

We have been invited by Honiton u3a to join their holiday to Bournemouth in October. Please see details later in this newsletter.

This is my last comment for the newsletter as Chairman. I have really enjoyed leading us forward over the past few years and working with an incredible committee. During this time I have met some really positive and amazing people who do so much for us all. I must say thank you to everyone who does anything to help, no matter how big a job or how small, it all helps. Thank you for allowing me to be your Chairman.

chairman@sidmouthu3a.org

REMINDER FOR ANY MEMBERS WHO HAVE NOT YET RENEWED THEIR MEMBERSHIP

You should all have received a membership renewal email or letter. If not, contact the Membership Secretary on membershipu3asidmouth@outlook.com

Please note: all membership renewals are due for payment during February.

As from 1 March, members who have not renewed are presumed to have resigned and will be unable to participate in any group or social activities. Membership can be reinstated at any time by payment of the outstanding renewal fee.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

AGM - March 11th 2025

The Annual General Meeting of Sidmouth u3a will take place at Stowford Rise Community Centre at 2pm, which will include various reports and the election of members to vacant Committee positions. Refreshments will be served from 1.30 until 2pm.

This will be followed by this month's talk by **Graham Short: "My Life as a Micro Artist"**.

Open Meeting - April 8th 2025: Alan Jenkins. "The Royal Visit That Went Wrong"

Stowford Rise Community Centre from 1.30-3.30pm. Refreshments served until 2pm.

Open Meeting - May 13th 2025: James Pellow. An Actor from Sidmouth Summer Season.

Stowford Rise Community Centre from 1.30-3.30pm. Refreshments served until 2pm.

SOCIAL EVENTS

More events are now being planned for 2025

If you would like to join the social committee please contact Jackie on social.jackie@sidmouthu3a.org

18 March: Evening Social - A Drink & Chat at The Blue Ball, Sidford

7-9pm, 3rd Tuesday of the month.

We usually meet at different venues each month, but for the next few months by popular request and for the March meeting we will be at the Blue Ball, Sidford.

All are welcome and it would be great if you could email confirming attendance please. If you'd like to be added to the group mailing list, please contact me at secretary@sidmouthu3a.org

10 April: Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

Orchestral Pictures: Debussy, Berlioz, Mussorgsky at Exeter University Great Hall, Exeter. Works include Mussorgsky's 'Pictures in an Exhibition' and Debussy's 'Prelude a l'apres midi d'un faune' BSO describes the works: Debussy's seductive painting of a languid, sun-drenched Sicilian afternoon. Mussorgsky's musical wanders through a fictitious gallery of works. Ravel's genius for scoring. Picturing outdoor scenes drawn from the most vivid experiences of Berlioz' Italian stay. Prices include coach to/from Exeter, pre-concert meal and tickets (various options):

Central Balcony: £56 | Side Balcony: £43 | Main Hall: £43 | Rear Stalls: £38

Enquiries to: social.marian@sidmouthu3a.org

11 April: National Trust Greenway

Discover the holiday home of Agatha Christie and her family.

The price of the trip includes coach travel and entry to Greenway, and there is an optional talk.

National Trust Members: £17 | Non-National Trust Members: £34 | Optional garden talk: £2.

This trip is now fully booked. If you wish to be put on the cancellation waiting list, contact:

social.veronica@sidmouthu3a.org

7 May 2025: Croquet Taster Session

u3a members are invited to a taster session at The Croquet Club, The Fortfield, Sidmouth on Wednesday 7 May at 2pm.

For more details download the [Croquet Taster Session flyer](#) or go to [Events on the website](#)

9 May: National Trust Tyntesfield & Cadbury Shopping Village

National Trust Tyntesfield is an ornate Victorian Gothic Revival house with extensive garden and parkland. A Gothic Revival masterpiece, richly decorated and furnished with a collection of over 72,000 objects, the house is surrounded by 540 acres of historic land.

Cadbury Garden Centre & Shopping Village is an expansive store with a wide range of products. The shopping village has multiple concessions, such as Lakeland, Cotton Traders, Jollyes Pet store and Maidenhead Aquatics.

National Trust Members: £25 | Non-National Trust Members: £44.

Enquiries to: social.jackie@sidmouthu3a.org

18-23 May: Gardens of Ireland

6 days/5 nights - from £1292 per person. A single supplement will apply. Flying from Exeter to Dublin with 3 nights in Dublin before transferring to Cork for 2 nights there before flying back to Bristol, then coach travel back to Sidmouth. Visiting the National Botanic Garden, Powerscourt, Hunting Brook, Jameson's Whiskey Distillery, Irish National Stud Japanese Garden, Bantry House and Gardens, Illnacullin, Blarney Castle and Gardens. There are optional tours to the Whitney Experience and to Murphy's Brewery in Cork.

For full details the leaflet and booking form will be available at the monthly meeting, or download the [Leaflet & Booking Form](#) or go to the website sidmouth.u3a.site.uk

6-10 October: An invitation from Honiton u3a

5 day, 4 night trip based in Bournemouth from **6th - 10th October** staying at the Marriott Highcliffe Hotel on half board. £577.

We will meet at a central point in Sidmouth as well as a Honiton pickup. Visiting Exbury Gardens, and Highcliffe Castle. With a Poole Harbour boat trip and a steam train ride in Swanage. An optional visit to NT Compton Acres but is not included in the price.

I should point out that single rooms are not available. If you would like to know more please feel free to ring me on **07419 190760**. Regards Marilyn

Free Online Courses

u3a National Learning offers on-line courses on many varied subjects.

Please see the link for details: u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events

GROUPS NEWS

Our groups are going strong, with two new groups started in January and another with vacancies opening up. Please contact the group leaders directly to find out more details. The full groups list (with group leaders' details) can be accessed here tinyurl.com/ytipzu4p or full details of all groups, with group leader contact details, can be found on our website: sidmouth.u3asite.uk/groups

New Group: Exotic Flavours

1st Tuesday (starting April with a limit of 10). Each month will have a theme and each member of the group will prepare some food from that country or region to share at lunch with the rest of the group. The first month is Caribbean and later in the year will be Thai, Japanese, Brazilian, Mexican and many more. Each member of the group will take turns to host. For more information contact [Janet Bailey](#)

New Group: Short Tennis

This is an indoor sport, played on a badminton court with short tennis racquets and foam balls. If you're interested, please contact Sharon Young on young5727@gmail.com

New Group: Ukuleles

Ukuleles are very cheap to buy, very portable and lots of fun. You don't need to be able to read music as long as you can count!

If you're interested, please contact Liz sidu3aukes@gmail.com

TECH CORNER WITH TONY WARREN



A popular misconception - CCTV Security cameras are just for security. Well, they're not. They are jolly useful in many other ways. For example, seeing if that parcel has arrived, or if the cat's at the back door. Most of them these days have speakers and microphones, so you can hold a conversation with someone, perhaps your gardener, and you might be miles away, using your phone.

The most common ones we see on houses are those clever little doorbell cameras. When someone rings the bell, you get an alert on your mobile, so you can see and speak to them.

There are many different makes, all setting you back a hundred pounds or less, look for RING or iGeek. Of course, you will need a WiFi connection in your house. The RING one also needs a forty pound annual subscription if you want footage stored for later. The iGeek doesn't because it has a memory chip in it - and it's cheaper.

Over the years I've installed CCTV systems for us and our friends. It was complicated, having to lay miles of cables round the outside of the house and setting up a control box somewhere inside. These days, it's a whole lot easier because they come wireless. You charge the batteries up every few months and they connect to your WiFi. You can simply switch them on, connect them to your WiFi and mount them outside somewhere. That's it. They cost around fifty pounds or so, all from our favourite online retailer. You can even twizzle them round to look up and down the road. One particularly expensive version will turn to point at an intruder. Now that's creepy!

These wireless gems are great for fixing to a post and sticking down the garden at night. The next morning, you connect up and look at what wildlife has been moving, crawling or slithering round the bushes while you've been sleeping. That's how I saw that a heron had removed our goldfish at the previous house.

Continued

It doesn't stop there though because you can have one inside your car stuck to the windscreen, recording your entire journey. The good old dashcam, for proving to insurance companies that you didn't cause the prang! They even come with a rear camera that can double as a reversing camera. They cost about forty pounds, and about another hundred if you want the local fitter to wire it in for you.

Finally of course, there's the baby monitor, a dinky little CCTV that watches over the babies, relaying sound to a monitor downstairs, and alerting you if it detects something unusual.

We're all being watched on cameras wherever we go, so why not join the party and take advantage of some brilliant and affordable technology.