

## Hello Everyone.

I hope you have been enjoying the early gorgeous spring weather. The daffodils are dying back but the bluebells are gloriously out. Shops and garden centres are full of colourful blooms and vegetables for planting. What a wonderful season is Spring.

**IMPORTANT** - The committee has decided that there is no need to sign in at the Open Meetings at Stowford. However, visitors will need to sign the visitors book as previously. We hope this will help alleviate the long queues when entering.

## 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](mailto:groupsal@sidmouthu3a.org) and M-Z groups to [groupsmz@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:groupsmz@sidmouthu3a.org)

Thank You and Kind Regards.  
Francetta Bridle - [newslettereditor@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:newslettereditor@sidmouthu3a.org)

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

I hope you are enjoying the chance to go on some outings, now we are almost into summer. The Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra was terrific in their spring concert at Exeter University Great Hall. It's a real bonus to go with u3a, when someone else organises the coach to Exeter, the meal in the Refectory and the concert tickets.

There are some very dedicated and hard working people behind the scenes of Sidmouth u3a, which brings me to say that we really need a Speaker Finder.

We are OK until March next year but need to start finding interesting talks for after that. Now before you all start clamouring to do the job, I will say that I have a few ideas already and would start you off in what is actually a very interesting post.....just imagine the power of choosing a variety of speakers. I look forward to hearing from some of you. Until June.....

Gail Richmond - [chairman@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:chairman@sidmouthu3a.org)

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

### Open Meeting - 13 May 2025: James Pellow. "A Lifetime on the Titanic".

James is an actor who has played at the Sidmouth Manor Pavilion for 20 Summer Seasons. Stowford Rise Community Centre from 1.30-3.30pm. Refreshments served until 2pm.

### Open Meeting - 10 June 2025: Dr. James Taylor. "Horatio Nelson, Britain's Greatest Admiral"

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

## SOCIAL EVENTS

### Evening Social - A Drink & Chat at The Blue Ball, Sidford

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

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](mailto:secretary@sidmouthu3a.org)

### 30 June: Taiko Drumming in Sidmouth

A Taiko Drumming one off session is on Monday June 30th at Primley Hall between 2 and 4 pm (14.00 - 16.00) Cost £20. The afternoon will include a talk on Taiko drumming and then a lesson where you will have your own drum and you will learn to drum yourself.

Taiko drumming is a Japanese art form involving playing wooden, barrel-shaped drums often in a dynamic and energetic ensemble, with roots in religious rituals, military signaling, and festivals.

Here is a more detailed look:.....

#### Origins and Purpose

Taiko drumming has ancient roots in Japan, used for various purposes including communication, religious ceremonies, festivals, and military signaling.

#### Modern Taiko

Modern taiko drumming is a high-energy performance art form that combines music, dance, martial arts, and athletics.

#### Performance Elements

Taiko performances often include lively shouts, ("kakegoe"), choreographed movements, and an immersive experience.

#### Cultural Significance

Taiko drumming is deeply rooted in Japanese culture, with drums used in temples, festivals, and as a means of communication and entertainment.

For more information and questions contact Jackie Cox [social.jackie@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:social.jackie@sidmouthu3a.org) 07788275463.

### 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. There is an optional visit to National Trust, 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

### November 19th 2025: Death on the Nile - Agatha Christie.

Torquay Princess Theatre - Matinee performance. Tickets price - £66.50 or £52. Including Coach from Sidmouth.

#### Taking bookings from the June meeting.

Further information from Jackie Cox. 07788255463. [social.jackie@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:social.jackie@sidmouthu3a.org)

### 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-event](http://u3a.org.uk/events/educational-event)

## GROUPS NEWS

### New Group - Ready to join a new "Group" group?

Calling guitarists, keyboard players, drummers, singers, musicians of all kinds . . . my name is Chris and I'm looking for others to join me in a new "Group". I've just moved to Sidmouth from Chorleywood in Hertfordshire.

I used to play guitar on my own and then discovered lots of others in the u3a doing the same thing. So, a few of us got together to play some songs and before we knew it we were a 9 piece band. We played pop, rock and roll, modern day songs, anything we liked - for fun. And it was great fun. I've jammed with a mandolin player, played in an acoustic 5 piece and also with a fully electric group. But all just for fun . . . although we did perform at the u3a Walking group Christmas lunch.

Drop me a line at [csmith7670@gmail.com](mailto:csmith7670@gmail.com) and let's see if we can get a new "group" off the ground. Chris Smith

### New Group: Exotic Flavours

1st Tuesday (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 [social.janet@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:social.janet@sidmouthu3a.org)

### Starting a New Group

If you need support to start a new group, particularly in the case of very long waiting lists for a group you wish to join, please speak to the Group Leader for help with this, or speak to the Groups coordinator.

Our groups are going strong. 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/ytjpzu4p](http://tinyurl.com/ytjpzu4p) or full details of all groups, with group leader contact details, can be found on our website:

[sidmouth.u3asite.uk/groups](http://sidmouth.u3asite.uk/groups)

### Canasta Players & Rummikub: changes to meeting days, times & venue + vacancies in both

Please note the following changes:

**Canasta Players** is now at 10.30-12.30 on the 1st & 3rd Mondays of the month, meeting at Primley Church Hall. There will be vacancies in the group from June.

**Rummikub** is now on the 1st Thursday of the month from 14.00-16.00, meeting at Primley Church Hall. There will be vacancies in the group from June.

## TECH CORNER WITH TONY WARREN: RECOGNITION



Ah, face recognition. It's not just for spotting your Auntie Jean in a crowded pub anymore. This clever little technology has quietly slipped into our lives, like a nosy neighbour peering over the fence, and it's doing everything from unlocking your phone to helping you buy a new pair of slippers. But how does it work? And more importantly, should we be worried that it's watching us while we're scrolling through cat videos in our pyjamas? Let's dive in.....

First though: how does it even recognise your face? Well, it's not magic (though it might as well be). It uses infrared light beams to scan your face. Like a digital torch that shines on your mug and maps out the unique bits—nose, chin, the dimple you got from that time you fell off your bike in 1976.

These beams bounce back to the device, creating a 3D map. It's like a high-tech version of tracing your face on a bit of paper, but without the crayons.

Now, where is it being used? Everywhere, apparently. Let's start with your mobile. Gone are the days of fumbling with passcodes or trying to remember if your PIN was your dog's birthday. Now, you just glance at your phone, and voilà—it unlocks. It's like a butler who knows your face but doesn't bring you tea. Handy, yes, but also slightly unnerving when you realise your phone knows your face better than your own spouse.

Then surveillance. Yes, Big Brother is watching, and he's got a really good camera. Face recognition is used in airports, train stations, and even high streets to spot people in crowds. It's like \*Where's Wally?\* but with criminals.

And while it's great for catching bad guys, it does make you wonder if you'll get flagged for that time you accidentally walked out of Tesco with a tin of beans you forgot to pay for. (We've all been there.)

Shopping has also jumped on the bandwagon. Some stores use it to track your movements and suggest products you might like. Imagine walking into a shop and being greeted with, "Hello, Dave! We saw you looking at those slippers. Shall we pop them in your basket?" It's like having a personal shopper, but one that knows you've been wearing the same socks since 2019.

But it's not all fun and games. Did you know soldiers in Ukraine have been told to switch off face recognition on their phones? Why? Because the infrared beams can make them visible to snipers with night-sights.

That's right—your phone's face unlock feature could literally put a target on your back. It's a stark reminder that while this tech is clever, it's not without its risks.

So, there you have it. Face recognition is everywhere, from your pocket to the high street. It's convenient, it's clever, and yes, it's a little bit creepy. But as long as it doesn't start judging us for our questionable fashion choices, I think we'll be alright. Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to go and disable face recognition on my phone. Just in case.



## CONTACTS

Contact details for the main committee and social committee can be found on our website: [sidmouth.u3asite.uk/contact](http://sidmouth.u3asite.uk/contact)