

## Hello Everyone.

What wonderful, glorious, Summer-like weather we have enjoyed but the soil needed the recent rain. Let us hope that this will not be the only period of good weather we have had for the rest of the summer months.

### **A reminder that 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:

As we are still awaiting a Group Coordinator for M-Z groups, Angie is trying to cope with all groups. Please email as usual for A-L groups to Angie at [groupsal@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:groupsal@sidmouthu3a.org) M-Z groups to [groupsmz@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:groupsmz@sidmouthu3a.org) . For those without email her Mobile number is – 07774 146209. However, the printed current list with the group contact details is usually available at the monthly meetings.

Thank You and Kind Regards.

Francetta Bridle - [newslettereditor@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:newslettereditor@sidmouthu3a.org)

## Chairman's Message

Hello.....and I hope you've been enjoying the lovely warm sunshine. I'm sorry I missed James Pellow speaking, but we had already booked a holiday to a somewhat chilly York.

Well now we're "on the up" as we have two people who will take over the "speaker finder" role. That just leaves 3 people to find: a vice chairman, a second group co-ordinator and finally someone to help Chris with Beacon. Do think about coming on the committee.....it's really not onerous and can be fun and fulfilling. You would be contributing to a very lively u3a and making it even more inviting and exciting. I am quite amazed at the variety of activities and groups we have on offer.

Do you ever feel like going out of your comfort zone and try riding a Segway for an hour or so? This has been on offer lately. If you have an idea for an activity, do let one of us know and we will see what we can do. I have a couple of suggestions for the autumn, but more of that later.

Until July.....Gail

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

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

**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.

**Open Meeting - 08 July 2025; Chris Woodward, The Jurassic Coast (Especially Kimmeridge-**  
Stowford Rise Community Centre from 1.30-3.30pm. Refreshments served until 2pm.

## SOCIAL EVENTS

### Segway Safari - Tuesday 17th June

There are still a few places available on the Segway Safari at the Escot Estate, near Ottery St Mary, on 17 June.

For more information and to make a reservation, go to the Sidmouth u3a Events webpage: [sidmouth.u3a.org.uk/segway-safari](http://sidmouth.u3a.org.uk/segway-safari)

### 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)

### Our Visit to National Trust Greenway April 2025.

We had a wonderful day at Greenway, Agatha Christie's holiday home in April, and were blessed with amazing weather. 30 intrepid explorers travelled by coach, thereby seeing beautiful views of sea and countryside.

We were warmly welcomed on our arrival and provided with maps and information on all Greenway has to offer.

After a quick coffee, several of us had the pleasure of an introductory garden talk by the Head Gardener, which was fascinating, not only about the garden but also the history of the house.

The house has an eclectic collection of silverware, ornaments, furniture and of course archaeological artefacts from the digs Agatha worked on with her husband, Max Melloran.

The house itself is absolutely fascinating. The grounds are spectacular and we were able to walk down to the River Dart at the bottom of the garden and had wonderful views towards Dartmouth. We visited the Boathouse where the crime in "Dead Man's Folly" took place. Altogether, we had a very pleasant day. Veronica Swinburn. Social Committee



### 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:..... Continued .....

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

## GROUPS NEWS

### 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.

### 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](https://tinyurl.com/ytjpzu4p) or full details of all groups, with group leader contact details, can be found on our website: [sidmouth.u3asite.uk/groups](https://sidmouth.u3asite.uk/groups)

### **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

## **TECH CORNER WITH TONY WARREN**

### **You Never Know Who's Listening**



Several of our smart devices can hear what we say. Most of them have to be activated, but not all.

Amazon Echo – “ALEXA”, Apple iPhones, Apple Watch, iPads, MacBooks – “SIRI”, Android Phones – “GOOGLE ASSISTANT”, Samsung phones, tablets, TV's, watches, earbuds, fridges (yes, fridges!) and “BIXBY”..

Being paranoid, I thought I'd find out who's listening. It was a shock. This is about ALEXA, but also applies to Apple SIRI and Samsung BIXBY.

In the UK, there are around 15 million households with Alexa capable devices and tens of millions with SIRI. There are around 19 million with Samsung and BIXBY;

Alexa on Amazon Echo is listening all the time, even if you don't call her by name. As of two weeks ago, you can no longer stop your conversations going on the cloud, which is on Amazon servers. When you set up an Echo, you have to speak so that it recognises YOU as an individual. It now knows your voice.

Amazon says “Alexa continuously collects and analyses voice data to improve its functionality and provide better user experiences. This data can include voice recordings, which are used to train and enhance Alexas AI capabilities.

By analysing these recordings, Amazon can potentially identify individuals based on their unique voice characteristics.” There have been instances where user data has been accessed by employees and contractors.

The recent changes to Alexas privacy policy and past incidents indicate that conversations with Alexa cannot be considered 100 percent safe from surveillance.

For example, in 2023, Amazon was fined \$25 million for violating children's privacy laws by storing recordings of children's interactions with Alexa indefinitely..... Continued.....

There is always a potential for government agencies to request access to voice recordings collected by Amazon. Legal frameworks could allow government agencies to request this data for various purposes, including law enforcement and national security. In the past, Alexa voice recordings have been used in criminal trials, highlighting the potential for legal access to this data.

Now, I expect you've read my Artificial Intelligence article, maybe even seen me talk about the subject. AI is "trained" by experiencing conversations. What ALEXA, SIRI and BIXBY hear is used to train their AI models. This is the primary reason for collecting voice recordings. BIXBY also shares your conversations with other organisations (see the terms and conditions). Amazon has admitted to having employees and contractors in America listen to a small sample of Alexa voice recordings. In 2019, it was reported that Amazon employees listened to as many as 1,000 audio samples during their shifts.

A question – How many times have you seen adverts appear on your social media after you've talked about the subject with family and friends? It happens all the time with us. They are listening.

My wife asked me why I was speaking so softly around the house. I said I was afraid someone in the USA was listening. She laughed, I laughed, SIRI laughed, ALEXA laughed and, in the garage, the TESLA was also chuckling.

## CONTACTS

Contact any of the main committee or social committee members below for information, to discuss matters or to put forward suggestions.

### Main Committee Members

Chairman	Gail Richmond	<a href="mailto:chairman@sidmouthu3a.org">chairman@sidmouthu3a.org</a>
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Contact details for the main committee and social committee can also be found on our website:  
[sidmouth.u3asite.uk/contact](http://sidmouth.u3asite.uk/contact)