

**Hello Everyone - Again, Again,** We still need a Vice Chairman to assist Gail and to continue forward with Sidmouth u3a. As we now have over 680 members, someone could step forward for this position. You just need personality and not to be afraid of public speaking. There will be plenty of help available for you.

Your committee are in the throes of planning your Christmas Party, and are thinking of something different to the previous years. As members arrive you will be given a plate with a mince pie, sausage roll, a posh biscuit and a raffle ticket to accompany your tea or coffee. There will be a Christmas talk from Moonstone Theatre Company Actress of 65 years Brenda Lismore, entitled "Christmas Crackers", followed by a raffle of 15 upmarket prizes. Music will be played by our very own Brian Fearnley leading his group of musicians to entertain us. We hope this will be a very enjoyable occasion.

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:

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

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Hello! 'Tis the season for spooks and fireworks! Are you ready for a witch or a skeleton to arrive on your doorstep, threatening menaces if you don't comply with their wishes?

Fortunately for us, we live in a flat with outside locked doors that not even the most adventurous "spook" would be able to enter.

And as for bangs and sparkles, there are plenty of those going off at any time, besides firework night. I'm afraid I only like the "pretty" ones and keep away from anything with a bang or a crackle.

Be aware of the spooks and sparkles..... you never know when they might appear!

On a more serious note, I want to make a special mention for Colin Davis who has recently passed away and who was one of the original Sidmouth u3a members. His funeral is at East Devon Crematorium on November 4th at 1pm. RIP Colin.

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

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

**Open Meeting - 11th November 2025 - Chris Woodward, Darwin & the Second Voyage of the Beagle**

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

**Open Meeting - December 9th 2025 - Christmas Party - Brenda Loosemore, "Christmas Crackers"**. Brenda is a very accomplished performer, from plays, pantomimes, musicals and open air productions, including Murder, Mystery events.

**Don't forget to wear your Christmas Jumpers and hats or anything Christmassy.** Stowford Rise Community Centre from 1.30-3.30pm including Christmas Foods.

## SOCIAL EVENTS

If you would like to join the social committee please contact Jackie on [social.jackie@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:social.jackie@sidmouthu3a.org)

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

7-9pm, 3rd Tuesday of the month. Any queries contact [secretary@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:secretary@sidmouthu3a.org)

### Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra Concert - Viva Espana.

Thursday 15th January 2026. 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm. Venue: [University of Exeter Great Hall](#). ~ Turina, de Falla, Debussy, Ravel.

Cost: Rear Stalls £42 | Mid-Stalls £50 | Central Balcony £61, including return coach to/from Exeter Great Hall and pre-concert meal. **Booking Required.** Further information from Jackie Cox. 07788255463. [social.jackie@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:social.jackie@sidmouthu3a.org)

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

Torquay Princess Theatre - Matinee performance. Departing at 10.30am. Agatha Christie's iconic mystery - Death on the Nile is coming to life on stage in a thrilling new adaptation by Ken Ludwig! Ticket price - £50 including coach from Sidmouth. **Only two places left** so be quick to grab them before it is too late. **Booking Required.** Further information from Jackie Cox. 07788255463. [social.jackie@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:social.jackie@sidmouthu3a.org)

### Tuesday, 2nd December 2025. - Clarks Village Outlet Shopping

Join us for a trip to the Street Outlet Village with an optional guided tour around the new Shoemaker's Museum.

Travel by coach to Street where we will have time for coffee before the optional guided tour around the fascinating, new Shoemaker's Museum.

With up to 60% off RRP every day at over 90 designer and high street brands, enjoy as much time as you wish exploring the shops for all your Christmas gifts.

Cost: £23 / £37 / £46 depending on selected option. **Booking Required**

For more information please contact Janet on [social.janet@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:social.janet@sidmouthu3a.org)

## GROUPS NEWS

Please email as usual for A-L groups to Angie at [groupsal@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:groupsal@sidmouthu3a.org) and Marilyn for M-Z groups at [groupsmz@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:groupsmz@sidmouthu3a.org)

The full groups list (with group leaders' details) can be accessed here - at [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](http://sidmouth.u3asite.uk/groups)

**New Group: Exotic Flavours** - It's not all about the spice! There are many flavours from around the world that are interesting and delicious, all food doesn't have to be hot and spicy, and that is what we are going to explore in this new group. October started with the Caribbean, then in November we will move to Southern India, (which is renowned for hot food, but we will be looking at more subtle flavours), then in December we will explore Morocco. We will meet on the 1st Wednesday of the month at noon and share food we have made. With a limit of 10 people. Each month will have a different 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. Each member of the group will take turns to host. For more information please contact Janet at [social.janet@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:social.janet@sidmouthu3a.org)

### **New On-Line Bridge Course**

My name is Ray Chalmers and I'm a member of u3a Ivybridge and I have just completed the U3A national online Beginners Bridge Course.

A new online u3a course is starting soon and is ideal for anyone interested in taking up bridge. Not only is it taught by experienced teachers, it uses the excellent, 'NoFearBridge' teaching resources and the Real Bridge platform supervised coaching and playing sessions. As well as learning bridge to a level that enables me to join my own u3a group and another bridge club, I also had an enjoyable time on the course and friendships formed enable me to continue to play bridge online with fellow course members. I'd certainly recommend the u3a course to anyone wanting to learn bridge. The course details are on the national u3a bridge\_group website - [www.bridgewebs.com/u3abridgework](http://www.bridgewebs.com/u3abridgework) - to anyone who may be interested in learning bridge.

**u3a National Learning** offers on-line courses on many varied subjects. Please see the link for details: [u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events](http://u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events)

**New Group** - Doggie meet up at the Donkey Sanctuary Restaurant 11am for coffee. Then the option to join in a dog walk around the sanctuary/ lunch in the restaurant. 1st and 3rd Monday. Contact Anne Field - [annefield2010@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:annefield2010@yahoo.co.uk)

## TECH CORNER WITH TONY WARREN

### E-bikes and E-scooters: The Future of Getting About (Without Getting Killed)



E-bikes and e-scooters have arrived in Sidmouth, whether we like it or not, and they're multiplying faster than Japanese knotweed.

But what exactly are these things, and why do they keep exploding? The Clever Bit, An e-bike is essentially a bicycle that's had enough of your excuses about Devon's hills. Inside the frame lurks a battery (usually lithium-ion, the same technology as your laptop), an electric motor, and a controller that decides how much help you need.

In the UK, legal e-bikes are limited to 15.5 mph and the motor can only assist while you're pedalling – you can't just twist a throttle and zoom off like you're in a 1970s cop show. E-scooters work similarly, but without the pedalling bit, which is precisely why they're illegal on UK roads and pavements. Yes, illegal.

Those riders you see aren't rebels without a cause; they're rebels without insurance, potentially facing a £300 fine and six points on their driving license. The only legal e scooters are hired ones in trial schemes – none of which, you'll notice, operate in Sidmouth.

**The Exploding Elephant in the Room Now**, about those fires. Lithium-ion batteries are remarkable things – they pack enormous energy into a small space. Unfortunately, if they're damaged, poorly manufactured, or charged with dodgy equipment, that energy can be released rather dramatically. Think "Viking funeral" rather than "gentle bicycle ride."

The problem isn't the technology itself – millions of e-bikes work perfectly safely. The danger comes from cheap imports with batteries that have seen fewer safety tests than a medieval plague remedy, and people who charge them overnight in hallways (blocking fire exits) or buy knock-off chargers from AliExpress to save a fiver.

Should You Get One? If you're considering an e-bike, they're genuinely brilliant. That hill up from the town center? Suddenly manageable. That ride to Otterton? Possible without arriving like you've run a marathon. Buy from a reputable dealer, use the proper charger, and don't store it where it could trap you if the worst happens.

As for e-scooters? Unless the law changes, they're a liability.

Tempting, convenient, but currently about as legal as brewing gin in your bathtub during Prohibition. The future of personal transport is undoubtedly electric. Just try to avoid the exploding bits.

Last word: The picture perfectly demonstrates that Artificial Intelligence can do pictures, but not words in pictures!!

*Anthony Warren*

## CONTACT DETAILS

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