

**Hello Everyone** - Happy New Year to You All. I hope you enjoyed a great time at Christmas with family and friends, or were supported by kindly folk so that you were not alone. Although I was, and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Our Christmas Party was a great success and thank you to everyone who came along and especially to all the people who helped with tables and chairs, the food and the drinks. Our own Sidmouth u3a band was fantastic, much better than most of what you hear these days and they even got some ladies dancing.

**See some of the photos at the end, showing the enjoyment we had.**

Great news to start off the year for Sidmouth u3a. I am very pleased to tell you that Janis Huntley has agreed to be Vice-Chairman for the next 2 and a bit years. She has had experience of the role and we warmly welcome her. A huge thank you to Janis for coming forward as it means we can continue into the future.

Also, another big thank you to Jill Williams for stepping into Neil's role on his retirement as our Membership Secretary. We will miss you Neil for your incisive insights and wit.

Sadly we say goodbye to Ray Appleby our Events Manager, and thank him for all his hard work, setting out the chairs and getting the hall ready for the Open Meetings. We wish him well. This means we now need a new person to take his place, plus a few helpers to assist would be great.

The committee has appointed Andrea Talbot as a 'Social Friend' who will send out cards to Sidmouth u3a members for special anniversaries or bereavements.

Please can I ask the Group Leaders and events organisers when submitting their copy for the newsletter, that they include their telephone contact numbers. Several of our members do not have email and therefore miss out on being able to join in.

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 - and season's greetings! I hope you have enjoyed all the festivities and are looking forward to the New Year.

If you didn't come to the Christmas u3a afternoon, you missed a treat! Brenda Loosemore entertained us with a talk and anecdotes about Christmas, whilst members enjoyed a plateful of festive food.

This was followed by our very own group of four playing and singing well known songs; this was their first gig and very successful it was!

Many people were lucky enough to receive a raffle prize, which was a new idea for this year.

And so we're onto a New Year, with a good variety of speakers and a couple of new groups starting up.

I have to give a huge thank you to all the people who helped to put out the tables and chairs for us, many of whom disappeared before the proceedings started. If we could have a regular "gang" who would organise the chairs at future meetings, that would be great!  
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

### Open Meeting - January 13th 2026: Richard Kay - "Mysterious Vermeer".

Richard is a very popular returning speaker from last year.

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

### Open Meeting - February 10th 2026: Todd Gray - Exeter & The British Empire.

1575-1986. Todd is another requested popular returning speaker for us.

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

## 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)

## GROUPS NEWS

**Music Appreciation** - The Music Appreciation group is thriving, and has recently enjoyed musical presentations on British Choral Music, Latin-American Music, and Sights and Sounds (an insider's look at what musicians see on the page, and how this affects their performances). 4th Thurs, 2-4pm in Primley Hall - all welcome.

To join contact - Amanda Haste. [amandahaste68@gmail.com](mailto:amandahaste68@gmail.com)



**French Conversation** - In December we celebrated Olive Flynn's 99th birthday. Olive has lived in Hong Kong, France, and Luxembourg, and worked as a *standardiste* (telephone exchange operator) in French for 6 years in the 1940s.

*Bon anniversaire Olive!*



**DOGGY WALKING GROUP** - Meet up at the Donkey Sanctuary Restaurant 11am for coffee. Then join in a dog walk around the sanctuary. Let the dogs get to know one another as we chat and walk. Then an option to have lunch in the restaurant.

Join once and see how it goes, and if you and your pooch enjoy the company and the exercise then meet up with us the first and third Monday of the month.

Contact Anne Field [annefield2010@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:annefield2010@yahoo.co.uk)

**YOGA** - There are vacancies in both seated and mat sessions on 1st and 3rd Fridays respectively.

Yoga is a spiritual practice, for the body, mind, emotions and energy level. It helps us to become more supple, keeps our joints moving, helps to release discomfort and stiffness from the body. Breathing techniques help to maintain our inner energy and calms the mind as do meditation and relaxation.

Practiced regularly Yoga can help us deal with our daily stresses and challenges.

Contact Helen at - [goodmanpaynehelen@gmail.com](mailto:goodmanpaynehelen@gmail.com)

**SHORT TENNIS** - The short tennis group has a couple of vacancies. We play in Sidford Social Hall on Fridays, 2-3pm. It is played on a badminton court with short racquets and a soft ball. Members contribute toward the cost of the hall on a term basis. Come along to a **Free taster session**. Thanks Sharon Young - [syoung5727@gmail.com](mailto:syoung5727@gmail.com)

**Bridge For Beginners** - Would you like to learn how to play Bridge? If so a basic tuition group could be created. Please contact Angie by email - [groupsal@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:groupsal@sidmouthu3a.org)

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 found on our website: [sidmouth.u3asite.uk/groups](http://sidmouth.u3asite.uk/groups)

## SPECIAL INTEREST

**British Telecom** are offering a free tech help service for u3a members. Here below is a comment from a member who used this recently.

'Paul spent 2 hours with me yesterday and helped me with my mobile phone, QR codes, iPad, Tablet, laptop and even getting my Nikon camera to automatically send photos to my mobile phone. If there's something he doesn't know (eg: camera to phone) he'll research it before he arrives.'

All trainers are DBS checked and paid by BT. No fees payable by members. It's a new initiative fully funded by BT, please contact Paul Scarborough, Digital Skills Trainer at - [paul.scarbrough@abilitynet.org.uk](mailto:paul.scarbrough@abilitynet.org.uk) if you are interested in this service.

**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)

## TECH CORNER WITH TONY WARREN

**“Don't they catch fire more often?”**

**(Abridged from a recent presentation given to the Science, Engineering & Technology group by Paul Swinburn.**

On the evening of 10th October 2023, Luton Airport's new Terminal 2 car park suffered a structural collapse after a huge fire ripped through it. Social media commentators quickly asserted that the fire was started by a hybrid-electric car. But it wasn't.

As later explained by the Bedfordshire Chief Fire Officer, it was started by an abandoned diesel Range Rover Sport. But the myth persists that electric cars catch fire more often than do their Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) siblings.

However, in Sweden it's been reported that “Petrol and diesel cars are 20 times more likely to catch fire than EV's” – although it does take much longer to extinguish an EV fire.

There are 3 main types of electric cars – a Mild Hybrid (a small battery helps the petrol engine to run a bit more efficiently); a Plug-in Hybrid, where a larger battery gives an electric-only range of perhaps 50 miles but the main propulsion is from an ICE and, thirdly, a Battery Electric (BEV) which runs entirely on electric power, usually with a “real world” range of between 150 and 500 miles.

In September, 72,779 BEV sales accounted for 23.3% of all new car registrations – partially thanks to the government grant – while used electric car sales are up too. There are now over 1.7m fully electric cars on British roads. With no exhaust emissions, much lower brake dust pollution, fewer breakdowns, lower maintenance and running costs and being easier and quieter to drive, it’s no wonder that over 85% of BEV owners say they won’t be going back to a petrol or diesel car.

Multiple studies are showing that the ‘whole life carbon debt’ (so, including the manufacturing process) of an electric car is paid off much earlier than previously thought and that when driven in Europe, an EV pays off its carbon debt by around 11,000 miles, after which the full-cycle CO2 emissions are some three times lower than the average petrol car.



Most owners charge their cars at home, often on low electricity tariffs. But there are now over 86,000 public chargers (up 22% since 2024) in the UK with the fastest growth rate being in the “ultra-rapid” category of 150KW and above, many located at M-way service stations. Although it is still harder to charge an electric car than to fill up an ICE, it’s getting easier and the promise of being able to “top-up charge your car while taking a coffee & toilet break” does now reflect the real experience of owners.

The RAC says that less than 1% of callouts to electric cars are because they’ve run out of charge.

BEVs often come with an 8-year, 100,000-mile guarantee on the high-voltage battery but the real-world experience is that these batteries are lasting much longer than originally predicted.

Only 1.5% of batteries are having to be replaced under warranty and Tesla reports that battery degradation on its older S and X models after 200,00 miles is averaging just 12%. Industry experts now widely accept that EV batteries will generally outlast the chassis of the car.

Anthony Warren

## CONTACT DETAILS

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

### Christmas Party 2025



**MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR**

**From  
Gail & Angie**

