

**Hello Everyone -**

**A plea for an Events Manager** to set up the hall for the open meetings. There are many willing helpers for the chairs and tables but it just takes a bit of organising. Please let Gail know if you will take on this role.

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!

I thought I would start this month with one of my favourite topics: the diversity of opportunities when you join a u3a.

January's talk was a "sell-out" with about 120 people listening to Richard Kay talking about "Mysterious Vermeer". It was an absolutely inspiring talk and so many members told me how much they had enjoyed it. And then we hopefully have another interesting talk in February with the return of a popular speaker, Todd Gray, on "Exeter and the British Empire". We are so lucky to have the chance to listen and to learn from such brilliant talks.

It is interesting how members enjoy their membership; some come to the monthly talks and others join interest groups or go on outings.....just make the most of a vibrant u3a in Sidmouth and "love, learn and laugh" as the saying goes. If there is sufficient interest, you can always start up a new group and would be well supported and helped in doing so.

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

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

**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

**Open Meeting - March 10th 2026: AGM. Followed by Tony Warren - Internet Safety.**

An important talk for your internet safety in this time of so many scams,

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)

### IMPORTANT.

Please email the relevant Group Leader for any of the groups you are interested in. The full groups list (with group leaders' details) can be accessed here - at [tinyurl.com/ytjpu4p](https://tinyurl.com/ytjpu4p) 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)

**Wanted:** A new group leader is needed for the Singles Weekend Lunch Group, if you would like to volunteer please contact Marilyn Burton on [groupsmz@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:groupsmz@sidmouthu3a.org) or talk to me at the monthly meeting.

### New Group - Knit and Natter/Craft and Chat

Location in Sidmouth on the 1st Monday afternoon of the month. Bring your own work that can be done without a table. Tea/coffee/cake provided for £1. Craft projects costing £1 would be done at a table approx every 4th week. Please contact Alison Daniel. [alisondaniel@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:alisondaniel@hotmail.co.uk)

**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. [amandahste68@gmail.com](mailto:amandahste68@gmail.com)

**Heritage Group** - The Heritage Group is hosting a talk at the Conservative Club, Sidmouth on 13th February 2026 (10.30 am for 11.00am start). Thomas Cadbury, Assistant Curator (Archaeology and Antiquities) at RAMM Museum, Exeter, will give a talk on the Seaton Down Hoard. If any general members are interested in attending this talk, they should contact one of the Organisers beforehand. They will be asked to make a contribution of £5.00 (in cash) on arrival at the venue. Contact Andrea Talbot [talbotandrea164@gmail.com](mailto:talbotandrea164@gmail.com) or Colin Boynton [c.boynton943@btinternet.com](mailto:c.boynton943@btinternet.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)

**The Supper Club** - enjoyed an evening at Exmouth Rockfish restaurant, the well known specialist eatery, serving high class fish and chips. It was a very wet evening and we were happy to come into the dry and have a "special deal" meal. We look forward to Rockfish opening in Sidmouth!

Here are a few photos from the evening.





### Visit to Coleton Fishacre April 24th 2026.

We are planning a coach visit to the NT Coleton Fishacre property in South Devon in April. This house is a stunning Arts and Crafts style property built in the 1920's for the D'Oyly Carte family as their country home. It boasts several outstanding entertaining rooms as well as bedrooms and downstairs servants' quarters. The gardens are RHS accredited and you can wander down through the valley to a viewpoint with sea views, though the climb back up is quite hard work. There is a good café where you can buy coffee and lunch, or take a picnic. We will be leaving Sidmouth about 10am and aim to start back at 3pm.

The price for NT members will be £25 and for non-members £44. Booking will open at the February meeting at Stowford or via the events page in February.

Veronica Swinburn. [social.veronica@sidmouthu3a.org](mailto:social.veronica@sidmouthu3a.org)

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

## TECH CORNER WITH TONY WARREN

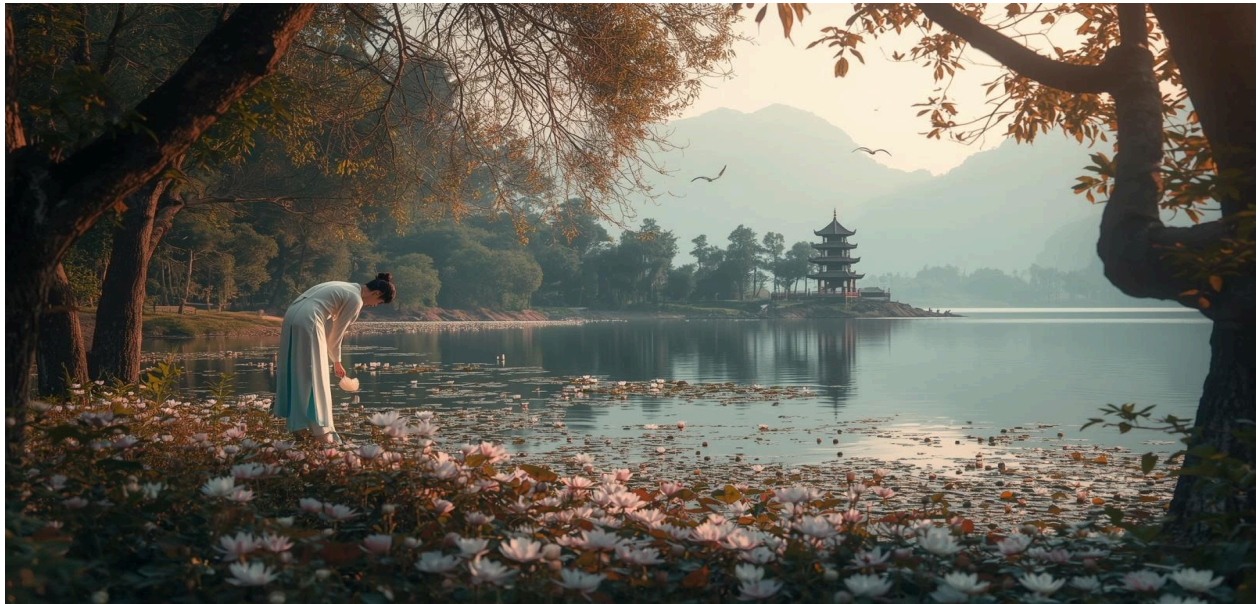
### Creating Beautiful Artwork for Your Home using AI.

I recently discovered that you can create stunning artwork for your walls using free AI tools—and have it professionally printed for under £10. The results are so impressive that visitors to my home assume I've purchased expensive prints.

**Getting Started** - Several free AI image generators are available online: Google's Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, or Canva's AI image tool. No special skills required—you simply describe what you want to see.

**The Secret: Being Specific** - The key to realistic results is writing a detailed prompt. I wanted a peaceful Chinese landscape for my living room. Instead of simply asking for "a Chinese landscape," I described it as a photographer would describe a shot.

**Continued.....**



Here's a shortened version of the prompt I used:

“Photographic landscape of serene Chinese countryside, shot with 85mm lens, golden hour lighting. Asymmetrical composition: dense forest frames left side, view opens right toward calm lake with water lilies. A Woman in pale silk hanfu picks wildflowers (back to camera, no face visible). Misty mountains in the background with a small pagoda on the far shore. Two birds in the sky. Soft cumulus clouds. Muted pastel colours—sage green, dusty rose, pale blue-grey. Natural depth of field, subtle film grain, no oversaturation.”

**Experiment with Styles** - You're not limited to photographic realism. Try adding style descriptors like “oil painting in the style of Claude Monet,” “watercolor illustration,” or “impressionist painting” to achieve different effects. Each produces remarkably different results from the same basic scene.

**From Screen to Wall** - Once you're happy with your image, download it as a high-resolution JPG file. I emailed mine to a local print shop who printed it on quality paper (100cm x 75cm) for under £10. Add an inexpensive frame, and you have gallery-worthy art for a fraction of traditional costs.

#### **Tips for Success** -

- Be specific about composition, lighting, and colors
- Mention technical details (camera lens, lighting conditions)
- Describe textures and materials
- Specify what you don't want included
- Generate several versions and choose your favorite
- Request muted, natural colors for more realistic results

**The Results** - The Chinese landscape now hangs in my home, and the quality is exceptional. The image is peaceful, detailed, and looks genuinely photographic. Friends are amazed when I tell them it's AI-generated.

This technology has democratized art creation. Whether you want landscapes, abstract art, or themed pieces to match your décor, you can now create custom artwork tailored exactly to your taste and space—all for less than the cost of a high-street print.

Why not give it a try? You might surprise yourself with what you can create.

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)