

Hello Everyone -

Another plea for someone to organise the set up in Stowford Hall for the open meetings. There are many willing helpers for the chairs and tables but it just takes a bit of directing. Please let Gail know if you will take on this role.

At the end of each meeting, could everyone who is able, please stack their chair in eights at the side of the hall. This would help immensely. Thank you.

We had a very informative talk about online safety from Tony Warren at the March Meeting with lots of questions afterward. Tony has included the safety information in his article below for you to access and don't forget to also read his Tech Corner at the end of the newsletter.

A reminder that articles for the newsletter must be received by 23rd of each month.

Group news items for the newsletter should be sent via the Group Coordinators in plenty of time.

Thank You and Kind Regards.

Francetta Bridle - newslettereditor@sidmouthu3a.org

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Reflections.....there's a word with several meanings. I'm just reflecting on my first year as Chairman of Sidmouth u3a; there have been several "ups and downs", but on the whole, I have survived and enjoyed many parts of the job. As with anything new, it isn't until you start, that you realise what the task entails.

Maybe some of you might reflect on how you can help our marvellous u3a.....the committee would be very happy to have one or two of you to join us.....not necessarily with a specific job, but to come forth with some fresh ideas and thoughts.

So, there we are, in a reflective mood.....and hoping for lots of inspiration for the coming year!

Until next month.....

Gail Richmond - chairman@sidmouthu3a.org

NORMA PEARCE FREE BOOKS - A reminder from Norma Pearce regarding the books she has to give away. You are welcome to call her on **01395 514906** to arrange a time to come along and choose your free books from a vast array of subjects.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Open Meeting - 14th April 2026: Carol Harper - Under Water Photography, Sidmouth Bay. Stowford Rise Community Centre from 1.30-3.30pm. Refreshments served until 2pm

Open Meeting - 12th May 2026: Ray Balkwell - An Artists View. Ray is a well known, highly regarded, prolific, professional Artist with several published books. Ray lives in Exmouth and his passion is the River Exe. 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

Evening Social - A Drink & Chat at The Blue Ball, Sidford. 7-9pm, 3rd Tuesday of the month. Any queries contact secretary@sidmouthu3a.org

GROUPS NEWS

IMPORTANT.

Please email the **relevant** Group Leader for any of the groups you are interested in and not via the Coordinators.

The full groups list (with group leaders' details) can be accessed here - at tinyurl.com/ytjpzu4p or full details of all groups, with group leader contact details, can be found on our website: 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 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 £1.00. Please contact Alison Daniel. alisondaniel@hotmail.co.uk

New Group - FILM CLUB

I would be interested in forming a Film Club with U3A members. The concept would be to meet once a month, or every two weeks, to discuss films that we have loved in the past. My interest is English films from the 50s onwards. I love the old British black and white films but equally enjoy newer films. I thought maybe members could watch a nominated film separately during a

specified timeframe that is available on Sky, Prime or Netflix or even Talking Pictures (by taping it). Each member would draw up their favourite film list of perhaps 10 films. Once a film has been nominated, we all watch it separately and then meet to discuss. I am happy to host the first group meeting.

This idea is just a starting point and could change as we evolve. We could even just chat about films in general if that would be a better idea.

If anyone is interested in this idea, please contact bcockett@hotmail.co.uk by the end of April.

Regards, Brenda and Robin Cockett.

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

Short Tennis - The short tennis group has vacancies. We play in Sidford Social Hall on Thursdays 2pm to 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

Yoga and Seated Yoga has discontinued.

A Good Read - This group now has a vacancy. We meet on the afternoon of the 3rd Thursday of the month. Please contact Eileen Conn - eileenconn1@yahoo.co.uk

Events

Kents Cavern and House of Marbles. May 19th 2026. Full day trip. Sign up at the April Stowford meeting. Cost £30.00 (includes coach and Kents Cavern underground Tour). Food and beverages are available at their Café or BRING a packed lunch and use their outdoor picnic area. Coach to leave Sidmouth at 9am and return by 4.30pm (approx).

NB The cavern is fully paved with electric lighting, handrails by the slopes and just 9 shallow steps throughout.

Kents Cavern encapsulates 400 million years of history with the first dwelling place of the human species in Britain (500,000 years ago).

Please see the attached menu if you wish to buy food or beverages.

https://www.kents-cavern.co.uk/uploads/firestone_kitchen_menu_jan_2026_final_1.pdf

Please email or text to check availability before booking.

Thank you. Marian Gadian marigad60@gmail.com 07592 639538

Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm Museum and National Trust Lytes Cary Manor.

June 26th. Leave at 9am and arrive at RNFAAM. 10.00am. Leave 1.45 arrive NT Lytes Cary at 14.00, leave at 16.00 return approximately 5pm. With four exhibition halls, over ninety aircraft, more than 2 million records, and 30 thousand artefacts, the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm Museum is Europe's largest naval aviation museum.

It is also home to the first British Concorde, the immersive Aircraft Carrier Experience and Barracuda Live: The Big Rebuild. Explore our collection, showing the evolution of the Fleet Air Arm from inception to modern day. Enjoy exhilarating days out and experience life at full throttle'

Explore the world of naval aviation, inside and out! Board real aircraft in our collection, including the legendary Concorde 002 (on loan from the Science Museum), and see life at sea with the Carrier Experience.

With an expansive interior, flight observation area, on-site café, and gift shop - the sky's the limit at the Fleet Air Arm Museum.

National Trust Lytes Cary Manor

A medieval manor house originally the home of Henry Lyte. Restored by Sir Walter Jenner in the early 20th century. Completed in 1348, the chapel predates the manor house.

Clustered around the manor house are stables, a milking parlour and cattle houses where barn owls roost.

An Arts and Crafts-inspired garden with a collection of topiary, herbaceous borders, croquet lawn and orchard.

A 350-acre estate with farmland, woodland copses, meadows and a stretch of the River Cary.

A small tea-room with indoor and outdoor seating that serves a range of hot and cold drinks, and light snacks.

Prices - Prices include return coach for Royal Fleet Air Arm Museum and National Trust Lytes Cary Manor.

National Trust members £36. Non National Trust members £50. Sign up at the April Stowford Meeting.

Royal Fleet Air Arm Museum and NT Lytes Cary. June 26th 2026. Full Day Trip. National Trust Members £36. Non National Trust Members. £50.00.

Jacqueline Cox - jacquelinestanhopecox@gmail.com

SPECIAL INTEREST

Online Safety - Tony Warren

Thank you for your interest in my presentation on staying safe in this digital world. I want everyone to be as safe as they can, so feel free to share this with anyone who would find value from it.

I have included a guide to using Gemini AI in the list of files you will find on the link. This is because there was so much interest in the subject.

I have attached two files for you:

1. Digital Paranoia.pdf - A PDF document of the presentation I gave.
2. Slide 15 Deepfake Tom Cruise.mp4 - The video that goes with Slide 15, because videos don't work in PDF's.

And here is a link to another six very useful files (And yes, this is a link in an email, but it's one you can trust :-)

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1I_UKzW4wN6KYzNHZIPRAyrYs9EEzmExp?usp=sharing

These are the files you can see or download from that link:-

3. **WhatsApp Ninja** - A WhatsApp cheat-sheet on how to use the app safely.
4. **Five Press Emergency Alert.pdf** - A guide to the mobile phone "five button press" SOS function
5. **VPN Virtual Private Networks and iPlayer.pdf** - A guide to using a VPN and iPlayer
6. **Your child's first mobile phone**
7. **Botnets**
8. **QUAD9**
9. **Gemini AI Guide**

Rather than click a link in an email (which I constantly tell people not to do!), you might like to copy and paste the above link into the address bar of your favourite browser, the choice is yours

Kind regards Tony Warren

TECH CORNER WITH TONY WARREN

From Old Photos to New Tricks: My Month with Gemini

Have you tried AI yet? You might have dipped your toes in the water with ChatGPT—the famous one—or perhaps Claude, the literary whiz. All brilliant in their own right, but this month, I want to introduce you to my personal favourite: Gemini.

It's by Google, which means it has a "world view" the others don't have. It doesn't just read text; it "sees" photos and "watches" videos.

Here are six ideas on what it can do:

1. The "What on Earth is This?" Screenshot

Error message on your computer? Don't type it all out! Take a screenshot and upload it. Gemini can look at the picture, tell you exactly what's wrong, and walk you through the fix.

2. Cleaning Up the Family Album -

Precious old photos that have seen better days? Using a tool within Gemini called Nano Banana (I promise I didn't make that name up!), you can upload a grainy or slightly damaged digital photo. It can "re-imagine" the missing details, sharpening faces and cleaning up the "noise" to give your memories a fresh lease on life.

3. The "Too Long; Didn't Watch" YouTube Trick

You get a 40-minute YouTube video of a lecture or a long-winded DIY tutorial, you don't have time to watch the whole thing. Paste the link into Gemini and ask: "Give me the five-minute version." It will watch the video for you and provide a concise summary of the key points. In seconds!

4. Your Own Personal Librarian (NotebookLM)

Researching local history or trying to get through a dense book? Try NotebookLM (Part of Gemini). You can upload entire documents or PDFs, and it will become an expert on them. You can then ask questions like, "What does this book say about Sidmouth's railway history?" and it will find the answer instantly.

5. Deciphering Doctor's Handwriting.

Found an old handwritten recipe or a scrawled note from the GP? Take a photo. Gemini's "eyes" are often better than ours at squinting through messy cursive. It can transcribe the text into a neat, readable list in seconds.

6. Planning the Perfect Day Trip

Planning a trip to Exeter or the Cotswolds? Instead of searching ten different websites, tell Gemini: "I'm taking the train, I don't want to walk more than a mile, and I love hidden gardens." It will scan the latest maps and reviews to build you a bespoke itinerary, complete with opening times.

The Bottom Line:

AI is for anyone who wants to save a bit of time or solve a daily puzzle. Whether you're using Gemini, ChatGPT, or Claude, the "secret sauce" is simply talking to it like a friend.

Give it a go this week—you might be surprised by what it "sees" in your photos!

As a taster, two photos attached of me at Stowford Hall. One with a lady, table and chairs. I asked Gemini to remove them, and that's the second photo. What I can't understand is how it knew to half open the window blind!

See Below.....



Antony Warren

CONTACT DETAILS

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