

**Hello Everyone,**

I hope you have been enjoying the glorious sunshine for the last few days.

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.

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](mailto:newslettereditor@sidmouthu3a.org)

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

### **VOLUNTEERING.**

Now there's another word, following on from last month. It is found in many conversations, especially of people of a certain age. I would like it to be part of people's lives: so many organisations, including ours, are heavily reliant on volunteers. My husband and I are volunteers at Killerton, as room guides, but having just been on an outing for Killerton volunteers, you realise how many there are, in different roles: visitor reception, shop, buggy driving, gardeners, rangers. Even in u3a we need plenty of volunteers: putting out chairs, tea making, running groups and organising social activities.

Volunteering is very rewarding; it is not difficult, and you will always be welcomed with open arms and made to feel worthwhile. So, if you haven't tried it, give it a whirl; it could be a whole new facet to your life, with a goodwill factor!

Until next month.....

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

### **Open Meeting - 9th June 2026: Mary Smith - 'A Schoolgirls War'.**

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

### **IMPORTANT.**

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

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](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 £1.00. Please contact Alison Daniel - [alisondaniel@hotmail.com](mailto:alisondaniel@hotmail.com).

**Cook and Share** - now has a vacancy. Please contact - Chris Gaine at [christinegaine@gmail.com](mailto:christinegaine@gmail.com)

**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](mailto:eileenconn1@yahoo.co.uk)

## Exploring Art Group at The Sherborne - 2 April 2026: The Sherborne Gallery (& Loo of the Year).

The Exploring Art group had a day trip to Sherborne to see the Quentin Blake Exhibition at The Sherborne Art Gallery, home to the nationally significant Thornhill Mural and 'Loo of the Year 2026'.



## 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 I 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](mailto:bcockett@hotmail.co.uk) by the end of April.

Regards, Brenda and Robin Cockett.

**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](mailto:syoung5727@gmail.com)

**Introduction to Bridge** - Would you like to learn how to play Bridge? A new group is being formed on a Wednesday afternoon. Please contact John Howton at [howtonj37@gmail.com](mailto:howtonj37@gmail.com)

## Events

### **Kent's Cavern and House of Marbles.**

May 19th 2026. Full-day trip. Cost £30.00 (includes coach and Kent's 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 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](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](mailto:marigad60@gmail.com) 07592 639538

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

Friday, June 26th 2026. Full-Day Trip. **Prices:** National Trust Members £36. Non National Trust Members. £50.00.

Leave Sidmouth Triangle at 9am and arrive at RNFAAM.10.15. Leave 1.45pm and arrive NT Lytes Cary at 14.00, leave at 16.00 return approximately 5.30pm.

**Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm Museum** - With four exhibition halls, over ninety aircraft, more than 2 million records, and 30 thousand artefacts, the 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 the 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.

Jacqueline Cox - jacquelinestanhopecox@gmail.com

**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.

Jacqueline Cox - jacquelinestanhopecox@gmail.com

## Forthcoming Events for your Diary - Full Details to Follow

August - NT Castle Drogo.

September 22nd - Longleat.

## TECH CORNER WITH TONY WARREN

### The Great Telephone Tangle: Saying Goodbye to the Copper Wire



If you've recently had a letter from your phone provider that sounded suspiciously like a summons to the 21st century, you aren't alone. The UK is currently undergoing a "Digital Voice" transition. In short: the old copper-wire network—the one that has served us faithfully since before we had grey hair—is being switched off. By 2027, the traditional "landline" will be as extinct as the telegram or a politician's promise..... Continued ....

## What's Actually Happening?

For decades, your telephone worked via a dedicated copper cable that ran from your house to a big green box on the street. It was reliable, it worked during power cuts, and the audio quality was... well, let's call it "nostalgic."

Now, everything is moving to the internet. Your "landline" will soon plug directly into the back of your internet router instead of the socket on the wall. It's essentially the same technology that allows teenagers to play video games with people in Tokyo, but used primarily for us to tell the local pharmacy that they've forgotten our prescription again.

## The "Practical" Perks (and Quirks)

The providers promise "crystal clear" audio. This is great, provided you actually want to hear your grandson's heavy breathing as he tries to remember what he did at school today. However, there is a catch. Since the phone now runs off your internet router, if you have a power cut, you lose the phone. No internet, no "Digital Voice." If you live in an area where the electricity is a bit temperamental (or if you don't have a mobile phone as a backup), the providers are duty-bound to give you a "battery backup" unit. It's a small black box that ensures you can still call for help even when the lights go out.

## The Great Migration

The best part? You don't need a new phone. Most existing handsets will work perfectly fine with a simple adapter. You also get to keep your existing number, so you don't have to reprint those address books or retrain your memory.

## A Final Farewell

There is something a bit melancholy about it, isn't there? The old system felt "physical." You could imagine the electricity buzzing along those wires across the Devon countryside. Now, our voices are being chopped into billions of digital "packets" and flung through fibre-optic cables at the speed of light.

But look on the bright side: at least the nuisance callers will sound much clearer. When "Steve" from a call centre in a different time zone tells you there's a problem with your Windows computer, you'll be able to hear his insincerity in high definition.

The verdict: Don't panic when the letter arrives. It's just the same old gossip, delivered by a brand-new postman.

## 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)