

From the Chair, Chris Atkins:

Our December Christmas party attracted a large attendance. The entertainer Greg Beedle was first class and his Witty Ditties including songs from Richard Stilgoe and the late Jake Thackray, George Formby & Victoria Wood. The songs were received with much laughter due to Greg's professional and polished performance. He kindly donated the £100 pounds raised by the raffle to The George Transforming Lives food bank, for which we sincerely thank him.

We delivered the food donations, which were substantial, and also the cheque for £100 + plus another £10 which came from a member who couldn't attend yesterday. The George were very pleased with our endeavours and have asked me to pass on their thanks. It's been a brilliant thing to do and I also send heartfelt thanks to all of you who made this possible.

The next date for our monthly meeting is on 8 January 2025. The speaker is a member of staff from Brimsmore Garden Centre who will talk on the intriguing topic of gardening folklore.

Looking back over the year we have achieved so much and our u3a community grows ever stronger.

Looking forward and we will start to plan our Open Day at our first committee meeting in January. Early spring seems the right time to hold this event and once we have formulated it, we will be asking that as many Group Leaders as possible take part showcasing their Groups.

By the time this newsletter reaches you, Christmas will be over. With this in mind and on behalf of myself and the committee all that remains is to wish each and everyone

a Happy New Year and may 2025 be filled with kindness and joy.

January Meeting on Wednesday 8 January, 2.15 for 2.30 start

Mike Burks from Brimsmore Garden Centre 'Gardening Folklore'

(See page 3 for information about the speaker & about parking)

Future Meetings currently arranged



12 February — Caroline Newark 'Obsession, Betrayal & Revenge: a medieval murder mystery about the death of Edward II in Berkely Castle'

12 March — Richard Kay 'From Here to the Horizon: Landscape Painting from 1500 to the present day'

9 April — Ann French 'Forty Years On: A Career in Textile Conservation'

14 May — Richard Salter 'A Potted History of Quakers in England'

11 June — Megan Haldane 'Cybercrime'

Please contact the Publicity & Events Secretary if you have ideas for Speakers



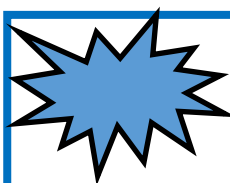
Welcome to our new members:

**Monica Richmond, Sheila Mayberry,
Colin Denham, Elizabeth D'Alton**

We look forward to speaking to you at a meeting, please make yourself known to a committee member when you attend.

The George Coffee Shop, Martock

Wednesday 9am — 1.30pm;
Thursday and Friday 10am — 4.30pm;
Saturday 9.30am — 1pm



**Celebration Corner
Happy Birthday to:**

Stewart Seery, Patricia Banks, Elaine Ashbee,
Clive Pembury, Jane Jones, Joe Bleasdale,
Rosalind Richings, Liz Hasted, Julie Reilly,
Ken Smith, Sarah Threlfall, Rosemary
Thomson

*If you would like your name mentioned,
please let the Membership Secretary know
your birth month if you haven't done so
already (phone 07555 033027 or email
martocku3amembership@gmail.com)*

*Do you have a special birthday or
anniversary coming up? Please let us know
so we can give you good wishes.*

Dates for Your January Diary

- Wednesday 8 January** 2.15pm for 2.30pm start, Martock Parish Hall —
Martock & District u3a monthly meeting
- Saturday 11 January** 10.00am-1.00pm, Moorlands Shopping Centre,
Martock — Farmer's Market
- Tuesday 14 January** Meet at 10.30am, Martock Recreation Ground —
Martock Health Walk (1 mile round recreation ground at
gentle pace)
- Friday 24 January** Meet at 10.30am, Moorlands Shopping Centre —
Martock Health Walk (30-45mins. level walking)
- Friday 31 January** 10.00am-12.00pm, Martock Parish Hall — Come For
Coffee

An Introduction to Mike Burks the speaker on 8 January

Mike is an honours degree graduate in Horticulture from the University of Bath. He is one of the founders of The Gardens Group. Brought up on an organic market garden, nursery and garden centre, horticulture is in his blood.

From January 2020 until 2022, Mike was Chairman of the Garden Centre Association and he is on the industry Growing Media Taskforce representing garden centres in the transition away from peat. He is a director of the Responsible Sourcing Scheme.

Mike speaks on a wide range of subjects with his favourites including trees and shrubs, border design, pest and diseases, climate change and organic gardening. His subject for this meeting is gardening folklore. Mike is the Managing Director of The Gardens Group.

Traditions for a good 2025

Historians estimate that the origins of New Year go back to ancient Babylon. Obviously, traditions have come and gone in the 4,000 years since, but marking the end of one year and the beginning of another with a lot of ceremony is a worldwide tradition.

In Spain the tradition is to eat one grape at each stroke of midnight. Those who do it are promised good luck for the next year provided you ruminant on their significance at the same time. If you fail to conscientiously finish your grapes by the time the clock stops chiming, you'll face misfortune in the new year.

Breaking a dish any other day of the year is bad. But in Denmark, smashing plates on New Year's Eve is par for the course. In one tradition, people go around breaking dishware on the doorsteps of their friends and family. The more shards there are in front of your home the next day, the luckier and more well liked you are.

In Greece, it's customary to hang bundles of onions above the door as a way of inviting in good luck. To the Greeks, onions are symbols of prosperity because they sprout even when no one is paying attention to them. On New Year's Day, parents also wake up their

children by gently bonking their kids on the head with the onions that were outside.

There are so many New Year's Eve traditions around foods, and lots of cultures say that eating round foods — reminiscent of coins or money — will lead to prosperity. In the Philippines, it's customary to eat 12 round fruits, one for every month, to ensure a year of abundance. The fruits usually take centre stage at the table for the 'media noche', or the midnight meal.

In Turkey, pomegranates are symbols of abundance. Eating them is great — but those who really want a good 2025 will smash the fruit on their doorstep instead. The more pieces there are and the farther they spread, the more prosperous the year will be. For a little extra luck, a sprinkle of salt in front of the door is said to bring peace.

Since the early 1900s, it's been a tradition to start off 1 January by submerging in freezing cold water, a ritual known by some as a Polar Bear Plunge.

Participants may use the swim as an opportunity to raise money for local charities, so all the teeth-chattering goes for a good cause.

If you want to join in and raise funds for charity, The Lyme Lunge 2025 is at 1.00pm sharp at the sandy beach, Lyme Regis!

Parking in The George Car Park for u3a Monthly Meetings

We are allowed to use this carpark without charge for most meetings. But please put your u3a Membership Card on your dashboard when parking for these meetings. Please car share as much as possible as there is limited space in the car park.

Thank you.

Martock & District Accounts Update

The final figures November 2024 show Income of £292.00, Expenditure of £537.40 with a total balance of £2,399.53 Please email the Treasurer on treasmaru3@gmail.com if you would like more detail about the accounts.

Martock & District Groups Update

If you wish to be or are a member of a Martock & District Group, **please note the following:**

1. To comply with the u3a Insurance Policy which covers Martock & District u3a, **all** members must be allocated to a Group by the Groups Secretary. Please do not approach a Group Leader directly; and
2. The u3a insurance does not provide personal accident cover and physically active group activities are undertaken at members' own risk.

If you wish to join or leave a Group, please contact the Groups Secretary, see back page for details. To ensure the insurance cover is valid, **all Group membership actions must be undertaken this way and not directly with a Group Leader.** Thank you.

If you are a Group Leader and would like to promote your Group in the Newsletter, please contact the Chair.

u3a Interest Groups Online

As a member of Martock & District u3a you can access online learning through the main u3a website — go to www.u3a.org.uk/learning/interest-groups-online/interest-groups-online-groups 39 groups from 3D printing at home to Zentangle Club via Archaeology, Climate Matters, Family History, Jazz, Law, Latin, Maths, Railways, Shakespeare and many other subjects!

Interest Groups Online offers a variety of peer led, online learning opportunities for its subscribers. As part of the u3a movement, members generously volunteer their time and share their knowledge, skills and experience with the members in their groups. Some groups are more interactive than others, with an expectation that all members take it in turns to present their knowledge. If in doubt, give it a go. The more groups you try, the more likely you'll find the one you love. To join a group, you must first be a paid member of Interest Groups Online. Annual membership is £12, covering the period from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025. If you join after 1st October, the fee is reduced to £6.

Friends Extra — Your Exclusive Benefits Hub

Subscribe to the u3a Friends Newsletter today at u3a.org.uk/newsletter
Once you subscribe, follow the link to join the Friends Extra Scheme
Unlock exclusive benefits & save money on shopping, travel, health, home, insurance & much more

Martock & District u3a Theatre Group

Would you like to come and see a matinee of *Pride & Prejudice (*sort of) at the Theatre Royal Bath on Wednesday 16 April at 2.30?**

Matinees do of course book up far more quickly than evening performances and many of the best seats are already booked up. However there are still plenty of good seats left if we book now.

Eight of us have already booked and I know that for a popular event like this, I'm sure I would find a taker for my ticket if I were unable to come at the last minute.



*Direct from its triumph in the West End where it won the Olivier Award for Best Comedy and the Evening Standard Award, *Pride and Prejudice** (*sort of) is a unique and audacious retelling of Jane Austen's most iconic love story. Men, money and microphones will be fought over in this irreverent but affectionate adaptation where the stakes couldn't be higher when it comes to romance. This multi-award-winning production features a string of pop classics including *Young Hearts Run Free*, *Will You Love Me Tomorrow* and *You're So Vain*.*

**********"Deserves the standing ovation it's getting nightly"* **Daily Telegraph**

**********"Completely faithful to the book, it's also a raucous, irreverent romp"* **Daily Mail**

********* *"Riotously funny"* **Variety**

We would have a light lunch before the show at Prezzo, near the station in Bath. We could share lifts into Bath. There is also a good train service from Yeovil Pen Mill, which we have used before for Bath matinees.

Tickets are £39 in the Dress Circle

If you are interested, please email Alison Bleasdale on alisonrbleasdale@gmail.com

Perhaps you would consider joining the Theatre Group, so you get information early about future visits.
If so please contact the Groups Secretary.

Normally our visits are not planned so far ahead but this show will be sold out a long time beforehand.

Have you got any useful hints, ideas, information or experiences you think members will be interested in? Please send your ideas to Chris Atkins.

Thank You Very Much

***To all the members who donated to our collection for
the Martock Transforming Lives Food Bank***

***We were able to take a boot-full of boxes and bags of food to the Food Bank
to help people in need to enjoy Christmas***



Martock & District u3a 2023-24 Committee

Chair – Chris Atkins martocku3achair24@gmail.com

Vice Chair – Stewart Seery

Treasurer – Sue Roberts treasmaru3@gmail.com

Secretary – Pat Brett commaru3a@gmail.com

Web Manager – Alison Bleasdale webmaru3a@gmail.com

Groups Secretary – Felicity Renshaw martocku3agroupssec1@gmail.com

Membership Secretary – Alison Sutton martocku3amembership@gmail.com or for information about membership please ring 07555 033027

Publicity & Events Secretary – Adrian Sutton pubmaru3a@gmail.com

The Committee welcomes feedback from members, by email to the Chair or the Secretary or through your Group Leader

DISCLAIMER:

The Committee reserves the right to edit submissions, if required.

January Facts and Legends ...

January is named after Janus, the Roman god of beginnings and transitions who had two heads, one looking forward to the new year and one looking backward. The Anglo-Saxons called it Wulf Monath because wolves came into villages for food at this time of year.



The birthstone for January is the garnet, which symbolizes good health, peace, and prosperity. The birth flowers for January are the snowdrop and the carnation.



New Year's Day is a time for looking forward, after welcoming in the new year just after midnight on New Year's Eve, known as Hogmanay in Scotland.

The custom of 'first footing' to bring good luck for the coming year still happens in many places in Scotland and elsewhere. People wait inside on New Year's Eve for a dark haired person to knock at midnight, carrying a piece of coal (symbolising a warm house), bread or salt (food for the year), money (money for the year) and greenery (for long life). The visitor then takes dust or ashes out with him, signifying the departure of the old year.

January is known as the coldest month in the UK and 1550 to 1750 was known as the Little ice Age, when

the River Thames regularly froze over, for as long as 3 months in some winters.

Elizabeth I walked on the ice in 1564 and the first recorded Frost Fair, with tents, sideshows and entertainment took place on the Thames in 1608.

Other January events include:

- In 1622, the Catholic Church adopted 1 January as the beginning of the New Year, instead of 25 March.
- 4 January 1967, Donald Campbell died in his speedboat Bluebird at a speed of 300 mph on Coniston Water, trying to break his world record of 276 mph.
- Lord Nelson, hero of the Battle of Trafalgar, was buried in St Paul's Cathedral on 9 January 1806.
- On 15 January 1559, Elizabeth I was crowned Queen of England at the age of 25.
- Britain's polar explorers led by Scott reached the South Pole on 17 January 1912 – only to find Roald Amundsen's expedition had beaten him by a month.
- On 27 January 1926, inventor John Logie Baird demonstrated his new television machine to members of the Royal Institution in London.
- London became the first city in the world to be lit by gas lights on 27 January 1807.
- On 30 January 1649, King Charles I was beheaded in Whitehall as 'an enemy of the people'.