

From the Chair, Chris Atkins:

Our first meeting of the new year was a thoroughly enjoyable occasion. Our speaker, Mike from Brimsmore, spoke entertainingly about gardeners' old wives tales, some of which we knew about but many that we had not heard before.

Our next speaker is Caroline Newark who will talk about a medieval murder that took place at Berkeley Castle. This promises to be an intriguing talk and one not to be missed if at all possible. We also need to have a Special General Meeting (SGM) after Caroline's talk as the new constitution needs to be voted on. All members will have received the documentation recently, so that any questions may be addressed ideally before the February meeting but of course if necessary at the SGM.

If our branch of u3a is to survive we must find at least two more committee members to shadow myself as Chair and Sue Roberts our Treasurer. More about this later in the newsletter.

Finally one of our members has generously offered to start and facilitate a choir and it would be fantastic to get this up and running. Those of you wishing to join this Group please give your details to our Group Secretary Felicity Renshaw.

With best wishes

Chris

February Meeting on Wednesday 12 February, 2.15 for 2.30 start

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

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

Future Meetings currently arranged

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'

9 July — Peter Isaacson 'Medical Detection Dogs'

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



Welcome to our new members:

**Debra and Phil Stringer, Alan Palmer,
Janet Gould, Lavinia Baird, Julia
O'Dowd, Janet and Michael Plummer,
Amanda Bayley**

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



**Celebration Corner
Happy Birthday to:**

Celia Jones, Helen Spens-Black, Keith
Bunkin, Alison Bleasdale, Carol White, Sue
Hewitt, Nick Bowers, Christine Morphett,
Peter Franche, Jean Heron,

*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 February Diary

- Saturday 8 February** 10.00am-1.00pm, Moorlands Shopping Centre,
Martock — Farmer's Market
- Tuesday 11 February** Meet at 10.30am, Martock Recreation Ground —
Martock Health Walk (1 mile round recreation ground at
gentle pace)
- Wednesday 12 February** 2.15pm for 2.30pm start, Martock Parish Hall —
Martock & District u3a monthly meeting
- Saturday 22 February** 7.00pm for 7.30pm start, Martock Parish Hall — Film
Night 'The Outrun'
- Friday 28 February** Meet at 10.30am, Moorlands Shopping Centre —
Martock Health Walk (30-45mins. level walking)
- Friday 28 February** 10.00am-12.00pm, Martock Parish Hall — Come 4 Coffee

Martock & District Accounts Update

The final figures December 2024 show Income of £114.71, Expenditure of £44.95 with a total balance of £2,426.30. The raffle raised £100 which was donated to the Martock Food Bank by Greg Beedle. Please email the Treasurer on treasmaru3@gmail.com if you would like more detail about the accounts.

An Introduction to Caroline Newark the speaker on 12 February

As a child Caroline wanted to be a farmer's wife, have twelve children and live in a house with roses round the door. Her parents wanted her to be somebody's wife, preferably a respectable, well-heeled, professional somebody, and her headmistress thought she should be a scientist. It never occurred to her that one day she would become a writer, yet here she is — writing.

However, she did become a farmer as well as a farmer's wife and she does live in a house with roses climbing over trees and pergolas, just outside the door; but she has 2 children (not 12) and now five grandchildren.

Caroline qualified as a teacher and after a career in teaching, took a law degree at Southampton University. She taught science and sewing(!) in Ghana and law at Aberystwyth University, opened a nursery school in Southampton and, together with her husband, milked Jersey cows in West Wales. In 2001 they moved the cows to Somerset and for several years made award-winning artisan cheese on their farm near Bruton. Retirement merely heralded a change of direction and Caroline began writing books about the lives of the women in her mother's family tree: twenty-one women means twenty-one books — the mothers, the daughters and the daughters-in-law, all with husbands and families and stories to tell.

The first book "The Pearl of France" is about Marguerite of France who, in 1299, married Edward I as his second wife. The last book will be about Caroline's mother, Kathleen Bainbridge who married Francis Newark, in 1934. Some of the stories will break one's heart, others will make one smile. Many of these women faced unimaginable hardship, danger and loss, while others schemed and plotted to get what they wanted. There were forced marriages and torrid love affairs, women who were betrayed by their husbands and others with long and happy marriages.

Today Caroline lives in Somerset, in her house with roses just outside the door, together with her husband, Richard. In her spare time she likes walking, reading, doing crosswords and eating mint chocolate.

Joining the Committee.....

Do you have the time and energy to join the Committee and be part of the future of Martock & District u3a?

As our Chair explained at the start of the January meeting, both she and the Treasurer will be retiring from the Committee in October. As these are 2 of the 3 Officers of our organisation which are required by law, the u3a cannot continue without members joining the Committee to take on these roles in due course.

So if you are computer literate, enjoy being involved and with time to attend one Committee meeting a month, please consider joining the Committee and contact Chris Atkins for more details.

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 Membership and Groups Update

The Committee would like to clarify how membership of the u3a works and how membership of Groups works for members and prospective members.

Membership (whether full, associate or Avalon membership) of Martock & District u3a entitles you to attend the monthly meetings, receive the Newsletter and other information, go on trips and join Groups.

Once you are a member, you can attend one session of a Group as a taster or you can join a Group straight away (provided there is space). However, it is not possible to have a taster session or join a Group if you are not a member.

So if you wish to have a taster session, 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 wish to be or are a member of a Martock & District Group, please note the following:

1. Please do not approach a Group Leader directly
2. To comply with the u3a Insurance Policy which covers Martock & District u3a, all members must be allocated to a Group by the Groups Secretary Felicity Renshaw martocku3agroupssec1@gmail.com
3. The u3a insurance does not provide personal accident cover and physically active group activities are undertaken at members' own risk.

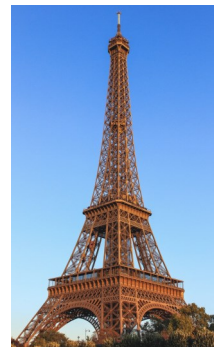
If you are a Group Leader and would like to promote your Group in the Newsletter, please contact the Chair.



Bonjour mesdames et messieurs

Can you help? A Group Leader is needed for the French Conversation & French Improvers Groups.

If you can help please contact the Groups Secretary on martocku3agroupssec1@gmail.com



Martock & District Theatre Group

We are going to three one-act plays on Thursday 20 February at 7.30 at the Warehouse Theatre in Ilminster, with pre-show supper at the Shrubbery Hotel. Tickets £12. Details on <https://www.thewarehousetheatre.org.uk/>. Contact alisonbleasdale@gmail.com

Martock & District u3a Book Group

**Do you always have a book on the go? Do you find it hard to walk past the entrance to Waterstones without popping in 'just for a quick look'? When you finish a book, would you enjoy talking about it to someone else who has also just read it?
If that is you, then you would enjoy belonging to a book group.**



The u3a Book Group has steadily increased in numbers and has reached the point when we can't get any bigger. There is a limit to how many can squeeze into the average living room and more importantly — how many can sustain a central discussion without breaking up into mini-discussions.

We can certainly set up a waiting list but even better would be to set up a second u3a Book Group. It just needs a minimum of three people who would like to read the same book and get together once a month to talk about it. I would be delighted to help in any way, giving information on how the existing Book Group runs and to share the current Book Group's programme. The new Group could start off with our programme, with different dates and venues, then move on in time to their own choice of books.

I have made good friends with members of the Book Group. I look forward to meetings and I enjoy reading books suggested by members that I would never have thought to read myself. With Martock & District u3a membership the size it is, there must be many people who would get a lot of pleasure from this new group. Do please contact the Groups Secretary Felicity Renshaw martocku3agroupssec1@gmail.com if you are interested.

Alison Bleasdale

***Have you got any useful hints, ideas, information or experiences you think members will be interested in? Are you a Group Leader who wishes to promote your Group?
Please send your ideas to Chris Atkins.***

CANCER RESEARCH UK EVENT

Location: Canford School, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 3AD

Date: Wednesday 19 February 2025

Doors open: 10.15am. **The event starts:** 10.45am

This immersive experience takes you through the history of Cancer Research UK, revisiting some of its biggest discoveries and telling the stories of the people who've made them possible. On the day, you'll hear from expert researchers and have a chance to connect with legacy supporters who are powering cutting-edge science for generations to come. One-third of our income is from gifts in Wills. This event is a celebration of our generous supporters, who are helping to bring about a world where everybody lives longer, better lives, free from the fear of cancer.

Refreshments and a light lunch will be provided, dietary needs catered for. Plenty of free parking available.

Go to <https://uk.emma-live.com/Stories-Of-Science-2024/> to book a place.

This event is hosted by the Gifts in Wills team of Cancer research UK. If you need to contact them about the event, get in touch with the Legacy Relationship Manager Claire Wainwright (who gave a presentation at the July monthly meeting last year) by phone at 07721 762458 or email Claire.Wainwright@cancer.org.uk



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.

February Facts and Legends ...

February, along with January, was introduced into the Roman calendar when the number of months increased from 10 to 12. The name comes from 'februa' meaning cleansing or purification. The Anglo-Saxons called it 'Sol-Monath' or 'cake month' because of the cakes offered to the gods at this time of year.



The February birthstone is the amethyst. The birth flowers violets and primrose.



As February has only 28 days and 29 in a Leap Year, in Welsh, February is sometimes known as 'y mis bach' which means 'little month'.

Unless it's a leap year, February, March, and November start on the same day of the week as each other.

The odds of being born on 29 February are about 1 in 1,461. Those born on a leap day can be called a 'leaper' or 'leapling'.

St Valentine's Day, 14 February, was originally thought to be the day birds chose their mates. There are a lot of romance traditions associated with St Valentine's Day, here are a few to think about:

- ◆ *The first man seen by an unmarried woman on 14 February would be her husband.*
- ◆ *If a woman saw a robin flying overhead on*

Valentine's Day she would marry a sailor; if she saw a sparrow she would marry a poor man and be very happy; and with a goldfinch she would marry a rich man.

Other February events include:

- In 1952, Queen Elizabeth II came to the throne on 6 February.
- On 8 February 1750, a minor earthquake shook Britain.
- Of all the words you can misspell, February is one of the most misspelled words in the English language.
- On 9 February 1964, 73 million Americans tuned in to the *Ed Sullivan Show* to watch four lads from Liverpool appear for the first time – The Beatles.
- On 11 February 1578, Sir Francis Drake became the first known Englishman to sail the Pacific Ocean.
- Britain went decimal on 15 February 1971. All banks were shut on 11 & 12 February to prepare for the changeover from pounds, shillings and pence.
- February is the only month where it's possible to go the entire time without having a full moon.
- On 21 February 1804, British engineer Richard Trevithick demonstrated the first steam engine to run on rails.
- The British Parliament voted to abandon the American War of Independence on 27 February 1872.