

From the Chair, Mark Ballard:

November's meeting included an informative presentation by Andy Day on the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) and the challenges they face adapting to the various climates that they operate in. It was interesting to see how much they too rely on the support of the volunteer sector.

Our December meeting will not include an external speaker but rest assured it will be great fun and we look forward to seeing you there to celebrate the Christmas season with some seasonal refreshments and of course some seasonal entertainment!

May I also remind members that we will be supporting the Martock Food Bank again this Christmas – it doesn't need to be just boxed or tinned food, toiletries are also well received and will help a family struggling at this time of year.

Christmas is a significant date in this nation's calendar and is a lovely time for families to be able to spend time together and make memories. I want to take the opportunity to remind everyone that it can also be a difficult time for some people. It can evoke memories of time gone by and people no longer here. Time spent with a person who would otherwise be on their own is in itself a great gift, it costs nothing and would mean so much to them. I have been struck by the warmth of the welcome that members show to each other at our meetings and is a huge part that the u3a plays in the work of the community.

I make no apology for again taking the opportunity to say thank you to the team behind the scenes, whether that be the fantastic committee, our great unsung heroes Barbara & Viv in the kitchen, Stewart and his helpers setting up the hall and of course the group leaders who keep that the various activities going. You serve this village and the district so well.

On behalf of the Committee, I wish you all seasonal best wishes.



December Meeting on Wednesday 10 December, 2.15 for 2.30 start
Christmas Party

(See page 3 for information about parking)

Future Meetings currently arranged

- 14 January 2026 — Brismore Gold Club 'Slightly Naughty Plants'
- 11 February — Andrew Wiley 'Yeovil Freewheelers Blood Bikes'
- 11 March — Jonathan Hoskyns 'North Perrott Fruit Farm and Apples'
- 8 April — Adrian Denning 'Spy radios'
- 13 May — Caroline Newark 'Till Death Do Us Part'

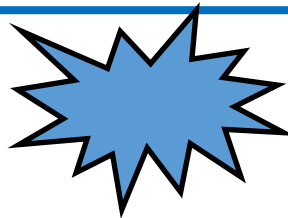
Please contact the Publicity & Events Secretary if you have ideas for Speakers



Welcome to our new members:

Diane Kingston, Malcom
McDonald

*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:**

Elizabeth Griffiths, Christopher Mitchell, Gloria
Graham, Lynne Stephens

*If you would like your name mentioned, please let
the Membership Secretary know your birth month if
you haven't done so already (contact details on last
page)*

Dates for Your December Diary

- Tuesday 2 Dec** 9.50am, Lighthouse Café, Stoke-sub-Hamdon — Stoke Long Health Walk (Ring Sue on 07792 311736 for details)
- Monday 8 Dec** 9.30am, Lighthouse Café — Montacute/ Stoke Short Health Walk, as above. 9.50am — Medium Walk, as above
- Tuesday 9 Dec** 10.30am, Martock Recreation Ground — Martock Health Walk (1 mile round recreation ground at gentle pace)
- Wednesday 10 Dec** 2.15pm for 2.30pm start, Martock Parish Hall — Martock & District u3a monthly meeting
- Saturday 13 Dec** 10.00am-1.00pm, Moorlands Shopping Centre, Martock — Farmer's Market
- Sunday 14 Dec** 10.30am-1.00pm, The David Hall, South Petherton — Jazz Café
- Monday 22 Dec** Montacute/Stoke Health Walks, as above
- Thursday 25 Dec** Happy Christmas!

Martock & District Accounts Update

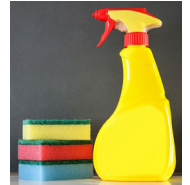
The final figures for Sept 2025 show Income of £369, Expenditure of £331.53 with a total balance of £2,690.51. Please email the Treasurer, Adrian Sutton, on treasmaru3@gmail.com if you would like more detail about the accounts.



Martock Food Bank — Christmas 2025

As we did last year and as a 'thankyou' for the use of The George car park for our monthly meetings, we will be collecting food and other items to donate to Transforming Lives, the Martock Food Bank, for the Christmas boxes that are given to those in need of help locally.

Please bring your donations of Christmas tinned or boxed food, other household items and items from a chemist (all very important for people in need) to the monthly meeting on 10 December.



If you wish to donate perishable items, please bring them to the December meeting.

Please ensure all items have an expiry date for after Christmas and preferably into 2026, so that people can properly benefit from your generosity.



Many thanks.

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.

u3a Interest Groups Online and u3a Online Learning Events

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!

You can also access u3a online learning events for free in many different areas and subjects. Go to <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events#Events>

Advertising our u3a

Do you live outside Martock? Could you put up posters to advertise our meetings where you live? If so, please contact Adrian on pubmaru3a@gmail.com

No printing needed, hard copy posters will be provided, laminated if necessary

Introducing the new Committee members

Cassy Treasure, Outreach Coordinator

I was born in Bath, in Somerset and then moved around the country living in various places, including London and Warminster. I spent 7 years in Sweden, originally going just for a summer to learn bee-keeping! In 2023 I returned to England to live in Martock and care for my father.

My landlady in Martock is a keen u3a member and suggested I join as well! Currently I'm in 2 Groups, which is all I have time for around other commitments as a carer and as a volunteer with 2 local charities.

My interests include: modern board games, both with the u3a group and other groups

within the village; cross stitch (as a first time entrant, I got Highly Commended in the village show this year!); and reading.



I look forward to developing the role of Outreach Coordinator for our u3a. I believe passionately that, as stated in our Constitution, u3a is open to anyone with time for themselves. As a younger member, it has been a lifeline to me in building friendships and networks within the community, as being a carer can be very isolating.

I look forward to meeting you at the monthly meetings or Groups and helping our u3a continue to grow..

THEATRE GROUP

Would anyone like to take over leading the Theatre Group?

There are 33 on the mailing list, all of whom have been in touch to say they would like to stay on the list.

19 of these have come to shows in the past year. We have been to shows at the Swan Theatre and Westlands Entertainment Centre in Yeovil, an arts talk at Haselbury Mill and a matinee at the Theatre Royal in Bath.

The most popular shows in the last year were to see Alice Worsley and Mary Beard.

If you are interested, please get in touch with the Groups Secretary on martocku3agroupssec1@gmail.com

Memory Café at All Saints Church, Martock will be on Tuesday 11 November 10-11.30. This a place for people with dementia and their carers to meet in a relaxed and friendly setting.

Timetable for Martock & District Groups

Monday am	Tuesday am	Wednesday am	Thursday am	Friday am
Scrabble — every week	Art — 1st and 3rd Art Appreciation — 4th Cycling — monthly Sewing — 2nd	Philosophy — 1st Science — 4th	Beginners' Bridge — 2nd and 4th	Bridge — every week
Monday pm	Tuesday pm	Wednesday pm	Thursday pm	Friday pm
Dance Group — 2nd and 4th MahJong — 2nd Play Reading Drama — 4th Spanish — alternate weeks Book Group 2 — 3rd	Flower Arranging — 3rd Modern Board Games — 1st and 3rd Recorders — 1st and 3rd Recorder Consort — alternate weeks Recorded Music— 1st Ukelele —alternate Tuesday & Wednesday Writing – Tuesday or Wednesday	Paper Crafting — 4th Ukelele —alternate Tuesday & Wednesday Writing – Tuesday or Wednesday	Book Group 1— 4th German Beginners — every week German Improvers — alternate weeks	

Other Groups that meet at times and venue agreed by the Members: Lunch Club; Theatre; Try A Craft; Garden Visiting

Book Group 2



Book Group 2 is looking for new members.
It now meets on the third Monday afternoon 2-3.30 pm.
Are you interested? If so please contact the Groups Secretary

Grants for Groups

Grants are available for Groups to buy equipment for their activity.

Also, if you have an idea for a Group but don't have what's needed to start a Group, you could get a grant to start up.

Contact the Chair on martocku3achair24@gmail.com to discuss your Group's needs or your ideas

For all Group matters, whether to arrange a taster session or to join a Group, please email Felicity Renshaw on martocku3agroupssec1@gmail.com



Martock & District u3a 2025-26 Committee

Chair – Mark Ballard martocku3achair24@gmail.com

Vice Chair – Stewart Seery

Treasurer – Adrian Sutton treasmaru3@gmail.com

Secretary – Mary Marshall commaru3a@gmail.com

Web Manager –

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 –

Outreach Co-ordinator — Cassy Treasure martocku3aoutreach@gmail.com

Committee member — Trudy Ballard

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.

December Facts and Legends ...

December's name derives from the Latin word 'decem' (meaning ten) because it was originally the tenth month of the year in the calendar of Romulus c. 750 BCE (BC), which began in March. The Anglo-Saxons called it Winter Monath or Yule Monath (because of the custom of a burning yule log around this time). However once Anglo-Saxons converted to Christianity, they called it Heligh Monath — Holy Month.

The December birthstone is turquoise, a symbol of good fortune and success.



The December flower is holly, which the Celts believed brought good luck and protection.



The winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, is on Sunday 21 December in 2025.

The December full moon is on Thursday 4 December this year. It is known as the Cold Moon. If you look skyward after 9.p.m on the night of 13 December — provided there isn't too much cloud cover! — you should be able to see the Geminid Meteor Shower.

This is the most active meteor shower of the year and it should carry on for a couple more nights, cloud cover permitting.

December events include:

- On 2 December 1697, St Paul's Cathedral opened. It was designed by Sir Christopher Wren.
- Crew from the British brigantine Dei Gratia boarded the drifting US ship Marie Celeste on 4 December 1872. The table was set for dinner but there was no sign of the captain or crew.
- On 11 December 1936, King Edward VIII renounced the throne, so he could marry the twice-divorced American Wallis Simpson.
- The Bill of Rights became part of the American Constitution on 15 December 1791. It provides protection for the basic rights of the individual to free expression and justice.
- On 21 December 1968, the first manned mission to the moon, Apollo 8, was successfully launched with astronauts James Lovell, Frank Borman and William Anders on board.
- The first recorded celebration of Christmas under the first Christian Emperor Constantine I was on 25 December 336 Common Era (AD).
- The first UK general election in which women were allowed to vote was on 28 December 1918.