

From the Chair, Mark Ballard:

It was lovely to see so many of you at the first meeting of the New Year. I hope that those of you who did attend, enjoyed the presentation from the Brimsmore Gold Club speaker Steve Fry. His talk was really informative and delivered in a humorous and engaging manner on the subject of “slightly naughty plants”.

January has been a rather wet and windy month and I hope that you have all managed to stay safe and avoid the various flooded roads and paths. We are fortunate to have several specific Facebook Groups that cover the various villages covered by our u3a membership to keep you informed on what can be quickly changing conditions.

The start of the new year is a great time to think about new challenges and learning opportunities, so please reach out to find out more about the huge array of clubs and interest groups that we have in our area. If you have a particular interest or hobby that isn't covered, then please discuss with any of the committee how you could develop this into maybe starting a new group?

Our February meeting will include a presentation by Andrew Wiley on the subject of Yeovil Freewheelers Blood Bikes. The money raised by the sale of refreshments will be going to support this fantastic charity, so a reminder to bring cash with you and the added bonus of being able to taste the usual selection of cakes that are on offer.

So I look forward to seeing you on Wednesday 11 February, 2.15 for a 2.30 start.

February 2026 Meeting on Wednesday 11 February, 2.15 for 2.30 start

Andrew Wiley ‘Yeovil Freewheelers Blood Bikes’

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

Future Meetings currently arranged

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’

10 June — David Webb ‘The UK Wild Otter Trust’

8 July — Brian Wright ‘Humpty Dumpty Sat On The Wall’

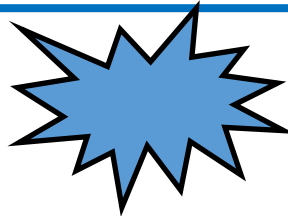
Please contact the Publicity & Events Secretary if you have ideas for Speakers



Welcome to our new members:

Stuart Crowther, Paula Gratton,
Valerie Wheadon, Cheryl
Sinfield, Fiona Paull, Pat
Trunkfield, Sue Paige

*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:

Jean Heron, Celia Jones, Helen Spens-Black, Katie
Houston, Keith Bunkin, Alison Bleasdale, Carol
White, Nick Bowers, Cheryl Sinfield, Sue Paige

*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 February Diary

- Tuesday 3 February** 9.50am, Lighthouse Café, Stoke-sub-Hamdon — Stoke Long
Health Walk (Ring Sue on 07792 311736 for details)
- Monday 9 Feb** 9.30am, Lighthouse Café — Montacute/ Stoke Short Health
Walk, as above. 9.50am — Medium Walk, as above
- Tuesday 10 Feb** 10.30am, Martock Recreation Ground — Martock Health
Walk (1 mile round recreation ground at gentle pace)
- Wednesday 11 Feb** 2.15pm for 2.30pm start, Martock Parish Hall — Martock &
District u3a monthly meeting
- Saturday 14 Feb** 10.00am-1.00pm, Moorlands Shopping Centre, Martock —
Farmer's Market
- Monday 23 Feb** Montacute/Stoke Health Walks, as above
- Saturday 28 Feb** 7.00pm for 7.30pm start, Martock Parish Hall — Film Night
'The Roses'

Martock & District Accounts Update

The final figures for December 2025 show Income of £189.00, Expenditure of £132.41 with
a total balance of £2,825.70. Please email the Treasurer, Adrian Sutton, on
treasmaru3@gmail.com if you would like more detail about the accounts.

An Introduction to Andrew Wiley

the speaker on 11 February

Andrew is the current chair / CEO of YFW Blood Bikes and has held the position for the last five years. He was brought up, the son of a farmer, in Norfolk but has lived in South Somerset and more latterly North Dorset, with his wife Clare, for some fifteen years and has been involved in YFW Blood Bikes for the last seven.

Andrew completed a full career as an Army Officer with the Army Air Corps, specialising, toward the end of his time in equipment procurement and then, having left the Army, worked as a management consultant. Now retired, he keeps himself busy as an Advanced Riding instructor for the Institute of Advanced Motorists, managing YFW Blood Bikes, wrestling the garden and walking and training his Wirehaired Vizsla "Mabel".

**Money from the sale of refreshments today will be donated to Yeovil Blood Bikes —
Please help us raise lots of money for this important charity**

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.

Financial Matters for Membership

The Committee has recently reviewed the costs of membership and the items that are covered by your membership fee. It was decided that some changes were needed to ensure our u3a can continue to meet its ongoing financial commitments.

These changes are:

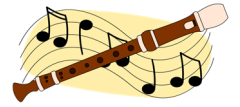
- **Printed Newsletter** Some members choose to have the monthly Newsletter in printed format. The cost of producing printed copies has greatly increased since 2020, with not only increased postal rates but the cost of paper, envelopes and printing. Therefore **from 1 April 2026**, for members renewing their membership who choose to have a printed Newsletter, **the cost will be £8.50 per year.**
- **u3a Matters Magazine** (previously known as Third Age Matters) About half of our members chose to have this publication in printed format. The u3a is currently charged £4.20 for each address that the magazine is sent to. This is a considerable burden on our finances. Almost all the neighbouring u3as to us make an charge extra if members want the printed magazine. Therefore **from 1 November 2026**, renewing members who want a printed copy of *u3a Matters Magazine* will be charged **£4.20 a year**

We encourage members who want to read u3a Matters to access the free version online at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/u3a-matters>. This is a shortened version without so many adverts!



*He's behind you
Oh no he's not!!*

WHAT A TALENTED LOT WE ARE!



If you came to the Christmas party at the December meeting last year, you'll have enjoyed our members entertaining us.

Many thanks to all those who took part.

Although it seems a long time away, the Committee are already looking for members and other locals to entertain us this year. So if you can do a funny monologue or you're a member of a local external choir or group who can provide part of a show, please contact the Chair (details on last page)

Introducing the new Committee members

Trudy Ballard, Committee Member

My husband Mark and I retired to Martock in September. We immediately joined the u3a as I enjoy hobbies such as Papercraft, Creative Writing and Reading.

I have 5 grown up children. The youngest, twins, are at University. My previous jobs have included being an

Insurance Broker and a Teaching Assistant, specialising in Autism and ADHD.

I have worked with Autism charities to provide workshops in schools for parents and teachers. Where we used to live I also volunteered at Share, a food charity that stops food waste going into Landfill and helps families and individuals to supplement their food shop to take the pressure off the food banks.

ART GROUP



Would anyone like to take over leading the Art Group? Either on your own or jointly with another member of the Group.

This creative Group has been led by Kay Durrant since the founding of our u3a. Many thanks to Kay for her time and energy.

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 10 February 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 Improvers — alternate weeks	

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

Possible new Groups?

Grants for Groups

Do you have an idea for a new Group? Would you be prepared to lead it, with someone else or on your own?

If so, please contact the Chair.

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

So, 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 idea and your Group's needs

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 Martockdistrictu3acommittee@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 ...

The month gets its name from the Latin word 'februum' which implies purification.

In Old English, February was also known as 'Solmonath' which means 'mud month' reflecting the muddy weather in many parts of Europe at this time of year. As we know well in Somerset!

Amethyst, a violet-coloured quartz, is the birthstone for February. It is typically associated with spiritual consciousness, inner serenity, and clarity of intellect.

February birth flowers are violet and iris.

Because February is associated with Valentine's Day, it always surprises people when they find out that roses aren't actually the official birth flower of the month.

February is the hottest month of the year in the Southern Hemisphere where it is considered the height of summer. This is due to the fact that the Southern Hemisphere has its summer season from December to February, whilst the Northern

Hemisphere has winter during this time. Countries such as Australia, New Zealand and South Africa have their school summer holidays. Conversely, in other parts of the Southern Hemisphere, such as Southeast Asia, Northern Australia, and the Pacific Islands, February can also be a time of high rainfall and tropical cyclones.

Other February events include:

- In 1952, Queen Elizabeth II came to the throne on 6 February.
- 73 million Americans tuned in to the *Ed Sullivan Show* on 9 February 1964 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.
- On 21 February 1804, British engineer Richard Trevithick demonstrated the first steam engine to run on rails.

