

Chair's Corner



Hello everyone

Just a quick word from me as I am slowly getting back in the u3a saddle after my medical sabbatical. Firstly, thanks for all your kind words and good wishes, they were very much appreciated. Also a big thank you to Simon for standing in as Chair during my enforced absence.



I'm looking forward to getting back to u3a activities in the next month or so and, without wishing to resort to cliches, I now realise what an important part of my life the u3a groups have become. You don't appreciate what you've got until it's gone folks!

Best Wishes to all.
Peter Walmsley - Chair

A Word From Simon

I would like to extend my thanks to the many members who made my time as Acting Chair go as smoothly as it has done. I can honestly say that it has been an honour and a pleasure to stand in for Peter in his absence and work with our wonderfully vibrant committee. I will continue to do so over the next month or so, until Peter's return to full health.

We have loads of exciting things planned for this year and hope that you will join with us as we make 2026 something to remember, and hopefully live up to in the future.

Barn Dance - early June
Talent Show - September

See more information later in this news letter

Next Open Meetings

Weathering the Storms

A talk by
Doctor Bel Deering

Community Engagement Officer
with Somerset Rivers Authority

16th February



A talk by
Mary King
MBE DL



My Olympic Journey

6 times Olympian, Mary, will take you through the difficult path taken to become an Olympian and win 3 Olympic medals and travel with her horses all over the world.

16th March

2pm - Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard

Entry fee is £2 for the talk and refreshments.

Non-u3a members welcome.

For further information, email

cidu3aspeakers@gmail.com,

telephone 07791 597339,

or search the web for "Chard Ilminster u3a"



The Amateur Dramatics Group have their sights set on the stage and are writing and building a play, from scratch, which they hope that many of you will come and see later in the year.



The group is small with plenty of scope to expand. If you fancy a small non speaking part or have designs to play the main character in a play,

this group is for you.

It is friendly and open to everyone with a thespian streak. We are also happy to welcome anyone with practical abilities or interest in making or finding props, sound,

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costume as well as a number of front of house positions from poster design to ticket sales. This is a really fun group, but don't take my word for it.... Rachel says:

As a child I used to love dressing up and making up plays but as I became an adult dreaming of being an actor faded into the background with me leading a career as a Social Worker.

In my 30's and 40's as well as working part time my life was filled with children being much of the time as a lone Mum.

I continued to dream of being an actor and creating plays but it was just that dreams.

In my 50's I joined a local amdrams group but the plays were written by others and in many ways unfulfilling. So when I heard that Chard and Ilminster u3a were thinking of starting a drama group I thought well I'll go along and see what its like.

I love it, its filled those dreams of not only being involved with a drama group but one where the members create the play or other types of performance from scratch so the lines to be learnt are created by the members who create the story and the characters.

Of course its not just about acting the group needs techie people and costume makers. So I would recommend you having a go.

Hope to see you there

**- Rachel Jordan
from Axminster**

So if anyone is inspired by this ringing endorsement, please get in contact.

Contact: **Simon Thomson**
cidu3aamdram@gmail.com

Talent Show

Having decided the talent show would be good fun and interesting for all of us u3a members, I was excited to see what talents we had. This could be ideal way to get to know everyone the rest of your group a little better.

This happened to our Wednesday Badminton group. I asked Rod if he would mind writing a

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play for us as I was aware he used to be a journalist and he agreed.

Unbeknown to me, Rod was very talented and has written plays before, what a result for us! Rod became our director and he was amazing, putting up with us untalented never-done-this-before people. He was so patient and kind, especially as some of us had problems remembering our lines. I was the worst for this, and you never were sure what I was going to say. Everyone just hoped it would be the correct lines. The fun and laughter we had was so memorable to us all.

We took it in turns opening our houses and we have all become good friends as we had to do so many rehearsals. I enjoyed seeing where everyone lived and getting a little look at their lives. When we went to Ray and Maia we were always treated to a lavish feast the like of which you would not believe!

The social side of doing the talent show was on a whole new level. These wonderful people I used to say hello to, and a quick chat have become friends. The talent show for us was a great success, we all remembered our lines and really enjoyed doing the show. We had lots of wonderful feedback, and all felt very proud of our achievement.

So, guys when you see the adverts for doing something for this years talent show, maybe give it go. You just need a little imagination. Between 4 and 7 minutes long. It's going to take place in the middle of September. Best to start planning now. Come on u3a members let's have some fun.

- Julie Young

If you are interested in joining in with the fun or you would like to encourage your group to participate, this event is open to all of our u3a members.

Contact: **Simon Thomson**
simonthomson1958@gmail.com

Barn Dance

Our wonderful committee is always looking for ways to encourage you to have a bit of fun. Our latest offering to you, is a Barn Dance to be held at The Windwhistle Inn, in Cricket St Thomas on June 5th from 2pm until 6pm with



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BBQ food, displays and between 4.30pm and 5.30pm dancing with a great caller and music. The idea is for everyone to have fun and enjoy ones self, with no pressure and a great venue. The cost will be £2 per head with food supplied by the Windwhistle Inn.



As places will be limited, tickets will be available in advance, and we will email everyone when they are ready.

Contact: **Julie Young**
cidu3acomms2@gmail.com

Short Tennis



We are looking for new members...
 We play short tennis indoors each Wednesday 10am until Midday on a badminton court at Broadway Village Hall.

All the necessary equipment is supplied, including racquets which are extremely light. Larger soft red balls are used. They travel slower and bounce less than standard tennis balls.

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The hall has a high ceiling and is well lit and there is ample free parking.

Sessions cost approximately £6 per member per month.

Contact: **Jim Lobley**
jim.lobley1950@gmail.com

Cricket



The Cricket Group are once again shouting out for members to join their fun and friendly group, which, due to ill health, has reduced our numbers from 14 to 11. They meet on Wednesday afternoons between 5pm and 6pm at Lifestyle Fitness, Holyrood School, Chard.

No particular skills are required to play, also, as we use a soft ball, no specialised kit is needed.

Contact: **Jim Lobley**
jim.lobley1950@gmail.com

Folk and Acoustic

We meet on the 1st and 4th Thursday afternoon of each month and everyone is welcome.

There's a mixture of music from Traditional to modern. If all you want is to listen, that's OK, if you want to join in choruses, that too is OK. If you play bazookie, fiddle, bodrahn, guitar or Didgeridoo, or sing a Capella, you would be most welcome.



Contact: **Simon Thomson**
simonthomson1958@gmail.com

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U3a Groups run by you for you

For more details visit: chardilminster.u3asite.uk/groups/ or u3abeacon.org.uk/u3agroups.php

A

Amateur Dramatics

Sundays
every other week

B

Badminton 1

Rusty Racquets,
Tuesdays 10:00-12:00
Broadway Village Hall

FULL
Start a new group

Badminton 2

Wednesdays 12:30-14:30
Broadway Village Hall

FULL
Start a new group

Badminton 3

Fridays 10:00-12:00
Broadway Village Hall

FULL
Start a new group

Board Games

Tuesdays 2.00pm
Ilminster Bowls Club

Book Choice

3rd Wednesday 10:00

Bridge Improvers

Tuesdays 14:00

Bridge Intermediate

Mondays 10:00
Ilminster Bowls Club

C

Canasta

Thursdays 10:00-12:00
except 1st week of Month meet Friday
Ilminster Bowls Club

FULL
Start a new group

Chess

Friday 14:00 2nd+4th Fridays Sep-Apr
no meeting May-Aug

FULL
Start a new group

Circle Dancing

Friday 14:00
Chard Guildhall

Crafting

3rd Tuesdays 10:00

FULL
Start a new group

Cricket

Wednesdays 17:00-18:00
Lifestyle Fitness, Holyrood Academy

D

Discussion

1st Monday 14:15

F

Family History

2nd Thursday 10:00

Folk and Acoustic

1st and 3rd Thursdays 14:00-16:00

Friends of Chard Museum

Various
Chard Museum

G

German Conversation

1st and 3rd Wednesday
Eleos Cafe

Golf

Cricket St Thomas Golf Club

Guitar Group

Alternate Wednesdays 14:00
Horton Village Hall

FULL
Start a new group

H

Harmony-Us

Tuesdays 19.00
Tatworth Memorial Hall

I

Intermediate Acoustic Guitar

Alternate Tuesdays 14:00
Horton Village Hall

FULL
Start a new group

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M

Music Appreciation

2nd Wednesday 10:00
Horton Village Hall

N

Natural History

4th Thursday 10.30
Various Venues

Needlecraft

2nd Wednesday 1pm to 3pm
Eleos Cafe

New to Writing

3rd Friday of each month 10:30
Gamesmaster Cafe

News and views

2nd Tuesday 10:00

Not Quite Authors

2nd Monday 10:30

O

Open Meeting

3rd Monday 14:00 (varies Jun-Aug)
Chard Guildhall or Horton Village Hall

P

Past Times

3rd Thursday 14:00 (not August)
Horton Village Hall

FULL
Start a new group

Play Reading 1

1st Wednesday 11:00
Eleos Cafe

Play Reading 2

3rd Wednesday 11:00
Eleos Cafe

Poetry for Pleasure

3rd Wednesday 14:00

R

Rambling 1

1st Friday 10:00
Countryside

Rambling 2

3rd Friday 09:30
Countryside

Reading for Pleasure

Last Wednesday 14:30

S

Scrabble

4th Thursday 19:00

Short Tennis 1

Thursdays 14:00-16:00
Broadway Village Hall

Short Tennis 2

Wednesdays 10:00-12:00
Broadway Village Hall

Skittles 1

3rd Tuesday 10:30
Haymaker Inn, Wadford

Skittles 2

4th Tuesday 10:30
Haymaker Inn, Wadford

Spanish

2nd and 4th Mondays 14:00

Sunday Lunch **FULL**

1st Sunday
Various Venues as advised by Leader

FULL
Start a new group

Sunday Lunch **FULL**

3rd Sunday
Various Venues as advised by Leader

FULL
Start a new group

T

Table Tennis 1

Tuesdays 10:00
Tatworth Memorial Hall

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Table Tennis 2

Thursdays 10:00
Tatworth Memorial Hall

Table Tennis 3

Fridays 10:00
Tatworth Memorial Hall

FULL
Start a new group

Table Tennis 4

Mondays 10:00
Tatworth Memorial Hall

FULL
Start a new group

Theatre

Various
Various Venues as advised by Leader

W

Wine Appreciation

1st Thursday 14:00
Donyatt Village Hall

From the Editor

Hello again, well, 2026 is here and I'm full of enthusiasm and looking forward to a wonderful new year, although the current wet spell is enough to strain the greatest of wills.

Many of you know that Cathy (our Treasurer) and I do a lot of singing and working at festivals and this year is no exception. Our first weekend festival is coming up at the end of this month in Sidmouth for a February Reunion. There is then a gap until May when life gets hectic! Upton-upon-Seven Folk Festival, West Somerset Folk Festival, Chippenham Folk Festival, New Forest Folk Festival, Bridport Folk Festival, Sidmouth Folk Festival, White Horse Folk Festival (Which we run), Compass Folk Festival and Bromyard Folk Festival... and maybe a couple more, then it's winter and time to relax! Fitted in to this busy schedule Cathy's sister is getting married in Penzance, we are booked to do a gig in June, then there are Thursdays, with u3a folk and acoustic on the 1st and 3rd Thursday and Windy Folk (our Chard Folk Club) on the 2nd and 4th Thursday as well as a number of other Folk and acoustic clubs we attend on other nights of the week, then I fit in this newsletter and the monthly talks. Cathy has all the treasuring things to do and I am a volunteer on the "Site Works" training team, creating training videos for new u3a webmasters to follow, when sorting out their

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websites around the country.

I thought that, if I wrote all this down it would give me an insight as to where all the free time we have, has gone... I failed to achieve this. One thing I do know is that I am so happy to be so busy and look forward to each and every day. May be, sometime soon, we'll manage to do some finishing off of the decorating and the building work that's been ongoing since we arrived here in May 2024.

Any letters for the newsletter should be sent to me, preferably by email or by snail mail to 18 Vicarage Close, Chard, Somerset. TA20 2HH.

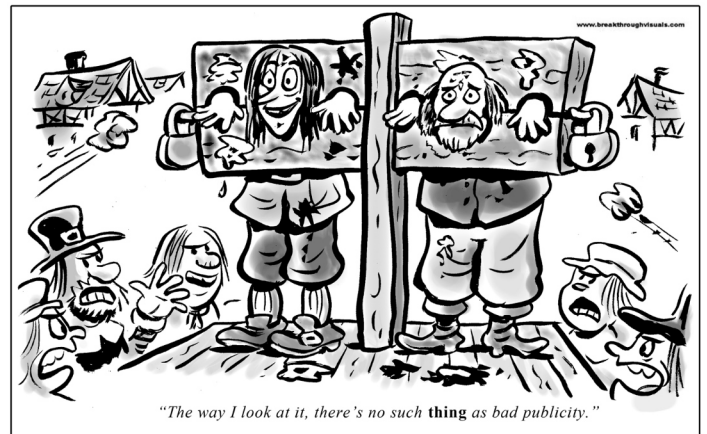
I hope you have enjoyed this newsletter and if you would like to make a contribution, either personal or for your group for the next one in May, please send them to me.

Deadlines

- 21st April for the May Newsletter
- 21st August for the September Newsletter
- 21st November for the December Newsletter
- 21st January for the February Newsletter

Simon Thomson

cidu3anewsletter@gmail.com



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Your local u3a Committee

Chair:



Peter Walmsley
cidu3achair@gmail.com
Business Secretary:



Michelle Miller
cidu3abussec@gmail.com
Communications and Publicity:



Pat Kyte
cidu3acomms@gmail.com



Julie Young
cidu3acomms2@gmail.com
Groups Coordinators:

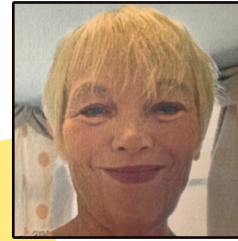


Lilly Sell-Dunkley
cidu3agroups@gmail.com

Groups Coordinators: continued



Lynda Le-Taylor
cidu3agroups2@gmail.com
Membership Secretary:



Patricia Hounsell
cidu3amemsec@gmail.com
Treasurer:



Cathy Wallis
cidu3atreasurer@gmail.com
Vice Chair, Facebook, Newsletter & Speakers Secretary:



Simon Thomson
cidu3aspeakers@gmail.com

The committee is made up of volunteers and they do not get any recompense for the work they carry out.



A talk by
Mary King
MBE DL



My Olympic Journey

Mary, 6 times Olympian, will take you through the difficult path taken to become an Olympian and win 3 Olympic medals and travel with her horses all over the world.



By Henry Bucklow
Lazy Photography

Imperial Cavalier
2012 London Olympics

“Such a genuinely lovely person”

Monday 16th March 2026 at 2pm
Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard

£2 Entrance includes refreshments

Non members always welcome

Find us on Facebook @chardilminsteru3a
or search the web for Chard and Ilminster u3a

