

**University of the Third Age**  
**Newsletter February 2019**  
[sheptonmalletu3a.org.uk](http://sheptonmalletu3a.org.uk)



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**1. Chat from the Chair**

I am so pleased to tell you that we have had a success in our search for 'Meeters and Greeters' who will welcome everyone to our Speaker Meetings. Jenny Wehrfritz and Val Sherring have volunteered for this role and will be able to point out tea and coffee facilities to visitors, assist Pete in ensuring our guest speaker has refreshment and all they require for their presentation. In addition, they will try to answer questions and generally help with this event. We can never have enough people willing to join in, so just ask if you can offer assistance in any capacity.

Our Singing for Pleasure group will shortly lose its founder, group leader and pianist, Alison Howells. Alison has decided that the time has come to hand over the baton after running this jolly group since its inception. Alison has led the group (ably assisted by Catherine Wylie) with great spirit, generosity and gentle good humour. Her musical ear must have been sorely tried since I joined last year! So another search begins - we ideally need a pianist to accompany our warbling. Please talk to Alison or Sue Dunne if this could be you.

Despite talk of a 'paperless' society, my drawers, desk and files continue to fill up. It was during a sort out of SMU3A files that I noticed Alison's name as an original member of the steering group which was the beginning of SMU3A in July 2011. It is heartening to see that several of those founding members are still actively supporting groups (as in playing and running the table tennis group - you know who you are Peter and Pam!). Our membership currently stands at 180 as we now continue to grow into our eighth year.

Thank you to everyone who makes this possible.

**Liz**



**Wells Cathedral**  
January Outing  
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**Right to roam**  
Walking the Canal Path  
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**Help still needed** our U3A needs you and your support, please contact any member of the committee or group leader if you would like to find out more about the roles listed:

### **Website Assistant**

We are hoping to find a computer literate person to learn all about our SMU3A website and help Keith to keep it updated and informative also to showcase what SMU3A is all about to the many visitors who view it every month.

### **Researcher for Speaker Meetings**

Pete, our excellent Speaker Meeting organiser would like help in seeking out interesting and lively speakers for our meetings. Access to internet and an enquiring mind are all that is required.

### **Venue and Facilities Finders**

If you know the halls, rooms and fees which are available for hire in your neighbourhood or village let us know. If you know people with a talent or skill they could share with us, let us know. We also need more sites for our posters advertising events. Information of this type will help enormously in starting up new groups and finding suitable places to meet. Hope to hear from lots of you soon!

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## **2. What's On**

### **SPEAKER MEETING**

**Speaker Meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month from 10.00 until 11.45 in the Council Chamber, Mendip District Council Offices.**

FREE tea and coffee available at every meeting

Entrance fee £1.50 for U3A members, £2.50 for guests. To avoid delays at the door, please have the correct money ready for collection, thank you.

#### **7 February**

**Tony Griffith:** The Art of Magic: An exploration of the magician's art including some tricks of the trade

#### **7 March**

**Barry Edwards:** The History of Penguin Books

#### **4 April**

**Mr John Robson:** Techniques of Forensic Dentistry

#### **2 May**

**Due to local elections the Council Chamber is not available to us in May. The venue for this speaker meeting will be at the Peter Street Rooms, Peter Street, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5BL. The meeting time is the same: 10:00 to 11:45**

**Andrew McElwee:** Working behind the scenes at the National Trust with entertaining and informing anecdotal stories

#### **6 June**

**Jonathan Rendel:** History of the Bishop's Palace, Wells

## Thank you

Speaker meeting organiser, Pete Norman, has received a letter from the Children's Hospice, South West thanking us for our £60 donation following Emily Pritchard's talk in September. Those of you who attended will remember her talk on the important work that the charity does to make the most of short and precious lives. If you are interested in finding out more about the charity please visit their website [www.chsw.org.uk/open](http://www.chsw.org.uk/open)

## December 2018 Speaker Meeting by Derek Hiller

For our December meeting, we were treated to a slide show and talk by Richard Raynsford entitled, 'Mendip Churches-Treasure Houses of Art'. The slide show introduced our audience to twenty or so churches and sites of worship within the Mendip area, too many to list individually but all with significant points of interest in their architecture and surroundings. We heard how churches were built in prominent positions in the heart of the community. St Mary Magdalene church at Ditcheat, for instance, was close to the Manor House, St Margaret's church at Babbington was built on the front lawn of the house, St Leonard's church in Butleigh is in the grounds of Butleigh court and at Orchardleigh and St Mary's church is idyllically located on its own island in the heart of the Orchardleigh Estate.



Many churches have defining features in their architecture including the Tin Tabernacle or Mission church at Alhampton built with corrugated iron-St Thomas' church in Wells with its unique use of Douling stone dressings and a slate roof-the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Emborough with its prominent central tower-the old church of St Andrew's in Holcombe, known locally as the plague church, now sadly closed, had been used recently for filming the latest series of Poldark, and the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Laverton with its unusual gabled tower.

We were shown slides of some of the internal and external features of the churches with ornate stone carvings including the very large and beautiful stone font, with carvings of green men, in St Peter's church Draycott and slides of gargoyles, stone carved features usually with faces, used to drain water from the church roof through their mouths and Hunky Punks, like a gargoyle but an architectural feature that is purely decorative, often referred to as 'a grotesque'.

Richard told us of other, not always obvious, features of the Mendip churches. Lychgates are found at the entrance to many churchyards including a triangular one at St Peter and St Paul's church in Kilmersdon, designed by Edwin Lutyens and at St Matthew's church in Wookey there are some fine timber carvings of strange beasts.

The talk continued with slides of various features found in the churches within the Mendip area including the gothic arched entrance to the church at Great Elm, old ironwork hinges at Meare, the beautiful blue and white painted ceiling of the apse in Babbington church, old wooden poor boxes still in place in the churches at Holcombe and Croscombe, stunning carved and painted roof panels in St Cuthbert's Wells, ornate brass chandeliers in Croscombe, Pilton and Draycott.

Some churches still have their original wooden pews with carved end panels and fold-down seats for children and several porches have interesting features like the fan vaulting of the porch ceiling at St Andrew's church in Mells, often used for weddings in the past, and an ornate plaster ceiling boss at St Cuthbert's in Wells.



### 2019 Snowdrop Festival 16-17 February

Full details of all the festival see their website:

[www.sheptonmalletsnowdropfestival.org.uk](http://www.sheptonmalletsnowdropfestival.org.uk)

Events taking place over the whole weekend include:

Specialist snowdrop sales, snowdrop planters through the town centre, snowdrop-themed shop window displays, daily workshops including How to make a hanging snowdrop ball (1.00-2.00pm - booking required), exhibition of photography and poetry competition entries, plus art and craft sales, meet the Shepton Mallet Horticultural Society, snowdrop stroll, snowdrop stencils, snowdrop fairy, visit the surviving gardens of the Shepton Mallet houses where James Allen lived and worked and purchase a snowdrop passport.



#### Saturday Events

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|-------------------|--|
| 10:00am           | Official Opening by Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, Mrs Annie Maw                                       |
| 11:00am & 12.30pm | Stories from the Street Poet   |
| 12:00pm           | Children's Fancy Dress Parade  |
| 2:00pm - 4:00pm   | Poetry Readings and Prize Giving for Poetry and Photography Competition                              |
| 7:00pm            | Adventures in Poetry Film - a screening of the 2018 poetic video works by the Poetry Film Collective |

#### Sunday Events

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 10:00am          | Snowdrop Church Service, followed by light refreshments in the Church of St Peter and St Paul                               |
| 10:00am – 4.00pm | Snowdrop-themed Sunday Market in the Market Place   |
| 10:30am          | Guided Snowdrop Ramble at Nunney, booking required, see website   |
| 11:00am          | Question Time For Gardeners hosted by Shepton Mallet Horticultural Society  |
| 1:30pm           | Celebratory Walk from Highfield House to Shepton Mallet Cemetery to plant snowdrops on James Allen's grave with street band |
| 3:00pm           | The Galanthophiles - 160 Years of Snowdrop Devotees-new book, talk and book-signing by Jennifer Harmer and Jane Kilpatrick  |

If you would like to contribute to Members' Corner please send your items of interest, articles, reminiscences, local history, photographs etc to the editor by 20th of the month.

**See also Woolcraft Group news item page 9**

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#### 4. U3A Regional and National News

<b>Regional</b>		No notifications
<b>National</b>	4 February	Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts and Book Art at the British Museum

11 March	U3A Explores Science at the Royal Institution A Plastic Ocean-Behind the Scenes, What Made Our Universe and Living is a Risky Business
21 March	British Art from Hogarth to Turner at the National Gallery Find out how eighteenth and early nineteenth century painters grappled with the rapid changes of life at that time in Britain
24-27 June	South East Summer School more information available soon

Full listings and details of all national events see What's On in Third Age Matters magazine, visit the website [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk) or sign up to the email newsletter.

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## 5. Group News

### New Group-Darts

Hi everyone and Happy New Year. Darts!  
Starting on **Thursday 7 February at 2.30pm**  
at the **Prestleigh Inn**. If you are interested in  
joining this new group, please just turn up at  
Prestleigh. Darts in hand, if you have a set, if  
not there is a set at the pub and I have two  
sets. If you would like any further  
information please get in touch. I look  
forward to seeing you. Janet Murray



### New Group- Ukulele

Are you interested in joining a ukulele  
group? If you are then please contact Keith  
Taylor



### Can you help the Singing for Pleasure Group?

Alison Howells has indicated that she will be relinquishing her role as group leader of the Singing for Pleasure group in March having led the group for over seven and a half years. This is a hugely popular group meeting twice a month and we are putting a call out for any U3A member piano players who would help the group to continue. This could be once or twice a month and could be shared if necessary. If you are interested please contact Alison or Catherine Wylie.

### **Music Appreciation Group** by Derek Hiller

For our January meeting the theme was for music associated with the letter J. We opened our first meeting of 2019 with August Wilhelmj's arrangement of Air on the G String, the second movement in Johann Sebastian Bach's Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D major. This was followed by an arrangement by John Tudor Davies of the Welsh hymn Gwahoddiad (Welsh for invitation), sung by Avon and Somerset Police Male Voice Choir. The English words and the tune were written in 1872 by the American Methodist minister and gospel songwriter Lewis Hartsough. We then heard music from the Love Scene of Romeo and Juliet, an orchestral work composed by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and performed by the Russian State Symphony Orchestra. The waltz **Artists' Life** by Johann Strauss II came next, known as The Waltz King this is one of his most well-known works and was performed by the New Symphony Orchestra of London. With a change of mood, we listened to **The Oxford Camerata playing Absalon Fili Mi**, a motet from David's lament, composed by **Josquin des Prez to commemorate the death of Giovanni Borgia, son of Pope Alexander VI**. Our next piece was Benjamin Britten's arrangement of the cheeky English folk song Foggy-Foggy Dew sung by Peter Piers - the song describes the outcome of an affair between a young weaver and a girl he courted for some time. This was followed by the Adagio movement from Leos Janacek's String Quartet No.1, or Kreutzer Sonata, written in 1923 and performed by the Jerusalem Quartet. The composition was inspired by Leo Tolstoy's novella The Kreutzer Sonata. Roses from the South came next, a waltz medley composed by Johann Strauss II in 1880 and performed by **Staatskapelle Dresden**. Our final piece was The Wilbur de Paris Jazz band playing Are you from Dixie. Daniel Decatur Emmett wrote the song for a New York minstrel show in 1859. Mickey Newbury used the opening verse from Dixie as the introduction for his three-song medley An American Trilogy, together with All My Trials and The Battle Hymn of the Republic. Elvis Presley released a cover version in 1972.

The next Music Appreciation group meeting is at 2pm on Wednesday 13 February when we will have music with a connection to **F** for February.

### **Shorter Walks**

This month's shorter walking group decided against the muddy fields and set off from Morrison's car park, Wells. Led by Liz, we picked up the old railway line, now a cycle track, to Dinder. On our way we passed several interesting pieces of sculpture. We then returned to the cathedral over the Bishop's Fields, finishing our walk in a local cafe for well deserved refreshments. A very pleasant walk, thank you Liz.



### **Flower Club-places available**

Freda Briars has let us know that she has two spaces in the Flower Club which meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 2pm. For further information please contact Freda.

### **Strollers** by Lyn Hook

Our meeting to organise strolls for 2019 is booked for **2pm on Thursday, 28 February** at the **Shrubbery in Shepton Mallet**. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at my first meeting as group leader and our strolls throughout the year. To date there are ten of us attending the meeting on the 28th; it would be great to hear from a few more strollers. Contact Lyn if you are interested in joining the group.

### **Walking** by Jenny Wehrfritz

Walking group struck out for the city this month with a circular walk around Bath. Our route took in the redevelopment along the river bank before entering Victoria Park and the botanical garden there, then on to the main sights of the Royal Crescent, the Circus and the Assembly Rooms. We made our way down to the city centre to the Pump Room and Bath Abbey, before crossing Pulteney Bridge to reach the Bathwick area with the Holborne Museum. Our walk ended along the towpath of the Kennet and Avon canal with a well deserved pub lunch.



**On the final stage of our fascinating walk round historic Bath on Monday led by Jenny and Eric**





The table above represents the usual meeting dates for groups. The actual dates may vary. Writing for Pleasure meets fortnightly at 2pm on a Thursday. They do not appear on the above chart along with Darts. Bus Pass Trippers travel on Saturdays. You should contact group leaders for confirmation of dates. For more information on any of our groups visit the website [www.sheptonmalletu3a.org.uk](http://www.sheptonmalletu3a.org.uk) or contact the individual group leader below.

## Group Contacts

<b>Art</b>	Gill Davies
<b>Books</b>	Sue Dunne
<b>Bowls</b>	Frank Booth
<b>Bridge</b>	Graham McCartney
<b>Bus Pass Trippers</b>	Janet Murray
<b>Collectables</b>	Liz Nash
<b>Darts</b>	Janet Murray
<b>Discussion</b>	Malcolm Weeks
<b>Family History</b>	Keith Taylor
<b>Flowers</b>	Freda Briars
<b>French</b>	Valerie Delaittre-Smith
<b>Munch Club</b>	Maggie Fowle
<b>Music</b>	Derek Hiller
<b>Appreciation</b>	
<b>Needlecraft</b>	Di Gommo Liz Weeks
<b>Recorders</b>	Sandra Morris Julie Newman
<b>Scrabble</b>	Di Gommo
<b>Singing for</b>	Alison Howells
<b>Pleasure</b>	Catherine Wylie
<b>Shorter Walks</b>	Jenny Wehrfritz
<b>Solos</b>	Janet Murray
<b>Strollers</b>	Lyn Hook
<b>Table Tennis</b>	Pam Mitchell
<b>1 and 2</b>	Peter Howell
<b>Walking</b>	Liz Weeks
<b>Woolcraft</b>	Pam Mitchell
<b>Writing for</b>	Catherine Wylie
<b>Pleasure</b>	

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## 6. Committee Members

### Meet the committee

#### Speaker meeting organiser

My name is Peter Norman. I have been a member of Shepton Mallet U3A for nearly five years, a committee member since July 2018 and have just completed my second year as the organiser of the monthly Speaker Meetings. I



knew very little about the U3A before I joined and my route into its world only came by chance! In early 2014 my wife Gill and I saw a poster in the Coffee Lounge Shepton Mallet advertising a talk on Greenland at a U3A meeting. Gill and I went to the meeting and received a very warm welcome. I remember former U3A Chairman Peter Howell opening the meeting and introducing guest speaker John Smith (U3A member) who gave a fascinating talk on a research expedition to Greenland, illustrated with a colour slide show. Little did I know then that one day I would be arranging and hosting these monthly meetings.

First impressions do count.

Gill and I joined the U3A and became involved with various activities such as the walking group, table tennis, skittles, bowls, quizzes and group outings. The photograph with this article was taken at a U3A outing to a bird of prey sanctuary near Bruton. I soon realised that the U3A had plenty to offer and share with other retirees looking to keep active in the community.

I have been involved with organising monthly Speaker Meetings since January 2017 and during 2017 shared the role with Barbara Voules who helped to find and book guest speakers. In my time as Speaker Meeting organiser I have tried to provide a programme of events covering a range of subjects. This involves a fair amount of time searching for suitable speakers from various sources such as the internet, lists of speakers obtained from other groups and societies, posters and notices in local libraries and attending selected talks in the locality to view potential speakers for our own U3A meetings. A very welcome other source is from recommendations made by our own U3A members. Many of these referrals have resulted in successful speaker events. Please keep these suggestions coming as it all helps in the production of meetings that suit your preferences.

Apart from the preparation for meetings and booking of guest speakers the actual morning of the event is usually a busy time. I am involved with welcoming the guest speaker and helping to set up any equipment needed for their presentation. Most speakers use some form of PowerPoint presentation which may involve their own laptop, memory stick or use of our own U3A laptop. Many thanks here to Keith Taylor who is usually on hand to set up equipment for the on screen presentation. I always breathe a sigh of relief when the guest speaker's presentation is on the screen and ready to roll! Once I have introduced the speaker it's just a matter of observing the talk and hoping there are no other issues. It is always good to receive feedback after a meeting, positive or not. This helps with future planning.

The role as a Speaker Meeting organiser is challenging; pleasing when a meeting appears to be well received by the members, frustrating when a speaker cancels at short notice.

I also need to maintain a good working relationship with Mendip District Council who hire us the Council Chamber for our monthly meetings. This involves adhering to their rules and regulations regarding use of their PowerPoint equipment, seating plans, use of refreshment facilities and general use of their property.

I hope the above gives some insight to the process involved with staging our monthly meetings.

I would like to make an appeal to any member who may be interested in helping me in finding suitable speakers for our meetings. Also, as I have previously mentioned, please keep your suggestions coming for possible speakers at our meetings.

Looking forward to seeing you at future monthly meetings.

<b>Chair</b>	Liz Nash
<b>Vice Chair and Publicity</b>	Derek Hiller
<b>Secretary</b>	Maggie Hardy
<b>Treasurer</b>	Jane Burman
<b>Groups Co-ordinator</b>	Sue Dunne
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Maggie Fowle
<b>Newsletter</b>	Julia Goddard
<b>Outings</b>	Janet Murray
<b>Speakers</b>	Pete Norman
<b>Website</b>	Keith Taylor

Thanks you to all our contributors this month. Photograph acknowledgements: Wirecutter and Wikipedia. Please send all your items for inclusion in the next newsletter by 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. Thank you.