

University of the Third Age
Newsletter March 2019
sheptonmalletu3a.org.uk



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1. Chat from the Chair

I am finding it difficult to 'live in the present' at the moment!

Our U3A book group choice this month is 'The Secret life of Bees' which is set in South Carolina in the 1960s when the Civil Rights movement was sweeping America. It's a good read. More recently though, Derek and I met up with Ian Keys, who is the leading light of the Darshill, Ham and Bowlsh Heritage project which is researching the history and industry of these three hamlets and their associations with the silk and woollen cloth weaving industry from the 1650s through to the late 1800s. Ian is looking for people to undertake research and others to help with outreach in our local schools, so that when the project comes to an end in September 2020 there will be a real legacy of information available which will help to highlight Shepton Mallet's importance during this time. Ian has written about this Lottery funded project, (see Members' Corner) and you will find all the information you need if you would like to be involved. If you have any documents, know anyone with artefacts or have a keen interest in the local area, please share them with Ian and his committee.

Looking to the near future, we shall be holding our AGM on Thursday 2 May immediately preceding the Speaker Meeting. Due to the local elections, taking place in the Chamber at MDC, our AGM will be held in The Peter Street Rooms. Further information will follow in the coming weeks. We will be holding our Membership Renewals mornings on Wednesday, 27 March and Thursday, 28 March at The Shrubbery Hotel. Again, more details are in this newsletter.



Pick a card, any card
Magic Speaker Meeting
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Hats off to Table Tennis
Christmas Lunch
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Please make every effort to come along on these dates, as it makes paperwork and accounts so much easier for Maggie, our Membership Secretary and Jane, our Treasurer who have a very busy few weeks sorting out end of year figures.

So, the year rolls on and the snow and Snowdrop Festival have come and gone. Happily, our Singing Group has found new pianists and organisers; the fledgling Darts Group has already met and The Strollers are in the throes of planning their calendar of events for the spring and summer...

Now, what day is it?!

Liz

2. What's On

2019-2020 Membership Renewal Dates

Wednesday 27 and Thursday 28 March

at the **Shrubbery Hotel**

from **10-12**

Why not stay for a chat and enjoy a cup of free coffee?

Annual membership beginning 1 April is £12 per person

Please note that membership is terminated if annual membership or other fees are unpaid 3 months after this date

Cheques **ONLY** please (no cash) made payable to: **Shepton Mallet U3A**

Forms available to download from the website under 'Membership' sheptonmalletu3a.org.uk or available at the March and April Speaker Meetings

If you are a UK taxpayer we would appreciate it if you would also fill in the Gift Aid Declaration

How to renew your membership if you are unable to attend a renewal meeting

By post: Cheques, completed forms and a stamped addressed envelope for your new membership card should be sent to:

Maggie Fowle

Membership Secretary

Shepton Mallet U3A, Ingsdon Farmhouse,

Bodden, Shepton Mallet, BA4 4PU

By Bank Transfer: You can renew your membership by bank transfer using the following details:

Sort Code 40-41-22, Account number 81449354

Please don't forget to include your name and send a completed form with a stamped addressed envelope for your new membership card to the Membership Secretary

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 March

Barry Edwards: The History of Penguin Books

4 April

Mr John Robson: Techniques of Forensic Dentistry

2 May

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

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 Peter Street Rooms will be open at 10am and can be accessed, for those who don't know, from Town Street which runs from Market Cross to the steps. There is an alley-way by number 12. As you pass through the alley there is a loading bay on your right and Peter Street is straight ahead. The Peter Street Rooms are in first building on the right.

There will be a short AGM to precede the speaker at 10.20

6 June

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

March 2019 Speaker Meeting by Derek Hiller

At our February Speaker Meeting we were given an entertaining, mystifying and humorous presentation by Tony Griffith entitled The Art of the Magician and his catchphrase is 'There is a Trick to every Trade but mine is a Trade of Tricks'.

Tony, who hails from Bristol, is a member of the Inner Magic Circle with Gold Star and has lectured to magic organisations in numerous countries, throughout the UK and at the famous Magic Castle, Hollywood where he has lectured on five occasions and presented his Close Up Magic Show over 100 times.

Tony first became interested in magic around the age of fourteen. He has a background in education including the headship of a primary school and researched the magic of science and philosophy of, I hear I forget, I see I remember, I do I understand.

Over the years, he has performed at concert parties and children's shows.

Tony started his presentation by showing us the first trick he had perfected with a series of cards with holes and spots, a



quite amazing series of card changes that completely bemused our audience. This was followed by tricks performed with a plastic ring and length of rope, all done with speed and sleight of hand, truly baffling! We were then shown several number puzzles with audience participation and a couple from the audience were invited to help in some very clever card tricks. We heard that playing cards first arrived in this country about six hundred years ago and, after some refinements, have changed very little over the years. Tony then spoke of two magicians who inspired and amused him. Chan Canasta, born Chananel Mifelew in Krakow, was probably the first TV magician in the 1950s. He came to Britain in 1947 and, after a short time in the RAF, became a well-known stage magician taking his surname from the card game canasta. He died in London aged seventy-nine. Secondly was Tommy Cooper who was born in Caerphilly. After seven years of military service, he was demobbed and took up show business in 1947. He developed his conjuring skills, became a member of the Magic Circle and was one of the most recognisable comedians in the world. Tommy died on

stage in 1984 aged sixty-three.



Tony Griffith has several publications available about the science and art of magic and we hope to invite Tony back sometime in the future for his talk entitled 'Magic of Science'.

Please visit his website for more information at www.tonygriffith.co.uk

Outings

March	Wednesday 6	Bath Aqua Glass Makers, Bath List now closed
April	Wednesday 3	Wincanton Races Car sharing from Dobbies at 11.30. Racing starts at 2pm Tickets £12pp
June	Tuesday 25	Glastonbury Festival Site 10am coach tour

For forms and details see Janet's emails. Please contact Janet if you have any ideas for future outings.

Thursday Coffee Mornings

Dobbies Restaurant, Shepton Mallet 10.30-12

All members and non-members are welcome every Thursday morning, except on the first Thursday when we have a Speaker Meeting. Join in for a coffee and friendly chat on **March 14, 21 and 28.**

3. Members' Corner

The Darshill, Ham and Bowlish Heritage Project



The Darshill and Bowlish Conservation Society (DBCS) is delving into the lost history of the three west Shepton Mallet hamlets of Darshill, Ham and Bowlish. The hamlets were centres of farming and cloth production, amongst other things, from medieval times until the turn of the 20th century and made a vital contribution to the local economy over hundreds of years, employing thousands of local people - and supporting their families - throughout that time. Stretching from the current-day Shepton water treatment works (built on the site of the biggest woollen cloth mill complex) at Lower Darshill, through current-day Darshill, Ham and Bowlish to Longbridge in the town centre, the mills drew their power from the River Sheppey via a series of mill ponds, channels and tunnels to drive mill wheels as large as 30 feet in diameter.

For two years from September 2018, the heritage project aims to study and understand the physical remains, the historic and present day environments, and to try and revive something of the lives of the people involved. We want to know what traces our forebears have left through the centuries of their toil, strife, birth, marriage and death. We owe it to them to make their legacy known and available to all.

The initial phase of the project is to research documentary evidence and carry out surveys of the architectural, archaeological and environmental heritage. During year two, a two-part major outreach programme is planned taking the results of the project into participating local schools to support their curriculum, and into the wider Somerset community through a series of public events.

Overall, we plan to improve the environment of the hamlets and make a real and lasting difference to the understanding of our exceptional town of Shepton Mallet.

We have been successful in gaining crucial financial support from the National Lottery Heritage Lottery Fund, the Medlock Charitable Trust and other donors, but the project still needs additional financial contributions. We want to involve as many members of our community in the project as we can and also hope that other people in the town will want to get involved too, or be inspired to begin their own related projects.

The Heritage Project and SMU3A

In discussion with Liz and Derek, the following ideas arose for potential projects, but you may have your own exciting ideas, of course:

- the 'public good' put in place by the mill owners, both temporal and spiritual
- historic newspaper research into the mills and their impact on the wider town
- the Huguenot heritage of the town
- life in Shepton Mallet in the 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries (food, work, clothes, pastimes etc)
- Shepton Mallet weaving songs (if they exist)
- the carters and horses story (the essential transport to make the industry work)
- criminality and unexpected death in Shepton Mallet: the Petty Sessions and Coroners' Courts.

To find out more about the project, please go to www.dbhp.org

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.

4. U3A Regional and National News

Regional		No notifications
National	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 or sign up to the email newsletter.

5. Group News

Singing for Pleasure

Alison Howells is standing down from leading the Singing for Pleasure group at the end of March together with Catherine Wylie. Val Sherring has kindly agreed to take over as Group Leader with Audrey Hutchison and Val playing the piano. The group will now meet **once a month** on the 4th Friday of the month from 10.30-12 noon in the Salvation Army rooms on Commercial Road. Val's contact details appear on the Group Contacts list.

Table Tennis by Peter Howell

The Table Tennis group continues to flourish with 12 or more members attending both the Tuesday and Friday sessions. We generally play doubles and there are enough players to have three tables in almost continuous use. Player skills and abilities vary but we all mix well together. There is a lot of banter and it is a very sociable two hours of fun and, at times, strenuous exercise.

On the 7 February, over 20 of us (including guests) went to Hartleys Kitchen in Binegar, for a



very enjoyable post-Christmas lunch. For some unexplained reason, everyone was asked to wear a hat and there was some creative and colourful headwear on display!

Music Appreciation by Derek Hiller

For our February meeting the theme was for music associated with the letter **F** for February. We certainly had a diverse collection of music choices, starting with Freddie Mercury and British rock band Queen singing Don't Stop Me Now, written by lead singer Freddie Mercury and featured on their 1978 album Jazz. This was followed by Fantasia on Greensleeves, composed by Ralph Vaughan Williams which appeared originally in his 1928 opera Sir John in Love and then, the Rondo movement of the Mozart flute concerto number 1, performed by the Pro Art Orchestra with German flautist Kurt Redel playing and conducting. To ring the changes, we listened to Ella Fitzgerald singing the Gershwin classic, Someone to watch over me, composed in 1926 by George Gershwin with lyrics by Ira Gershwin then, with a further change of mood, we heard the beautiful Pie Jesu from Faure's Requiem sung by treble Aiden Oliver with the City of London Symphonia conducted by David Hill. We then moved to Scotland with the Hebrides Overture, known also as Fingal's Cave, composed in 1830 by Felix Mendelssohn and performed by the London Symphony Orchestra with Claudio Abbado as conductor. Our mixed choices changed again as we heard Fleet

Foxes, an indie folk band from Seattle, with two tracks from their first album released in 2008, *White Winter Hymnal* and *Oliver James*, followed by *O Fortuna* from *Carmina Burana*, a scenic cantata composed in 1935 and 1936 by Carl Orff. This was followed by the set of three solo piano works, *Liebesträume*, by Franz Liszt, published in 1850, played by Cuban born American pianist Jorge Bolet and then, another helping of Freddie Mercury singing, *These are the Days of our Lives*, largely written by their drummer Roger Taylor.

We then listened to the very lovely *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra*, composed by Gerald Finzi in 1955, comprising three movements, *Allegro*, *Andante* and *Rondo Adagio*.

Our final piece was *Foxtrot in F*, the third movement from *The Suite for Jazz Orchestra No. 1* by Dmitri Shostakovich, composed in 1934 and performed by the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra with Ricardo Chailly conducting.

The next Music Appreciation group meeting is at 2.00pm on Wednesday 13 March when we will have music with a connection to **M** for March.

Walking



Pet and John organised the late January walk when 14 members enjoyed a lovely winter's walk around the Hood Monument near Butleigh.



In February 20 members met at Croscombe and walked to Dinder where Sandra, who led and researched the walk, told us of the Dragon of Dinder that was vanquished by Bishop Jocelyn after it had terrorised the neighbourhood. We returned along Worminster Sleight named after the Old English word for a dragon, 'worm'. An excellent lunch was had at the George Inn.

Monthly Activities

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Monday	Walking French Intermediate 2-3pm Beginners 3-4pm	Discussion 10.30am Bowls 11am Art 2-4pm	Walking French Intermediate 2-3pm Beginners 3-4pm Woolcraft 2.30pm	Bowls 11am Art 2-4pm
Tuesday	Book Group 10.15am Bridge 2pm Table Tennis 2pm Flower Club 2pm	Collectables 11am Table Tennis 2pm Bridge 2pm Needlecraft 2pm Recorder Playing 2pm	Family History 1 10.30am Bridge 2pm Table Tennis 2pm	Family History 2 10.30 Table Tennis 2pm Bridge 2pm Needlecraft 2pm Recorder Playing 2pm
Wednesday		Music Appreciation 2pm		
Thursday	Speaker Meeting 10.30am Darts 2.30	Coffee 10.30am Scrabble 2pm	Shorter Walks Coffee 10.30am Strollers 1.30pm	Coffee 10.30am Scrabble 2pm
Friday	Table Tennis 2pm	Table Tennis 2pm	Munch Club Table Tennis 2pm	Singing for Pleasure 10.30-12 Table Tennis 2pm

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. 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 or contact the individual group leader below.

Group Contacts

Art	Gill Davies
Books	Sue Dunne
Bowls	Frank Booth
Bridge	Graham McCartney
Bus Pass Trippers	Janet Murray
Collectables	Liz Nash
Darts	Janet Murray
Discussion	Malcolm Weeks
Family History	Keith Taylor
Flowers	Freda Briars
French	Valerie Delaittre-Smith
Munch Club	Maggie Fowle
Music	Derek Hiller
Appreciation	

Needlecraft	Di Gommo Liz Weeks
Recorders	Sandra Morris Julie Newman
Scrabble	Di Gommo
Singing for Pleasure	Val Sherring
Shorter Walks	Jenny Wehrfritz
Solos	Janet Murray
Strollers	Lyn Hook
Table Tennis	Pam Mitchell
1 and 2	Peter Howell
Walking	Liz Weeks
Woolcraft	Pam Mitchell
Writing for Pleasure	Catherine Wylie

6. Committee Members

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

Thanks you to all our contributors this month. Please send all your items for inclusion in the next newsletter by 20th of the month. Thank you.