

**University of the Third Age**  
**Newsletter June 2019**  
sheptonmalletu3a.org.uk



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**1. Chat from the Chair**

Those of you who attended our AGM in May will know that the existing committee was returned to serve another year. Our May committee meeting was held in a room at Shepton Mallet Leisure Centre. This is our new venue for the coming months, I am not sure if any of us will be availing ourselves of the other facilities after the meetings!

Jane, Maggie, Derek and I can now throw away our 'L' plates having survived the last 12 months in our new roles. We should all be hugely grateful to the other six committee members who have generously agreed to carry on with their existing roles also. However, we do need our newest members to come forward and discover that committee duties can be personally rewarding as well as great fun and a very important and worthwhile contribution to our group and the wider community.

All community events are important and Derek has booked SMU3A a space at the Mid Somerset (Shepton Show) in August, where we will once again promote the benefits of membership. In connection to this, I was interested to read in the National U3A newsletter that a proposal has been agreed by the Third Age Trust (I quote): *that, for publicity purposes, our logo will not include the wording "University of the Third Age" instead it will have the strap line "learning laugh live"*. This new way of publicising the U3A movement aims to reinforce the broad and open nature of the U3A and is a similar branding approach to that associated with bodies such as BBC, BMW, CNN.

Over the coming months, members will notice the re-branding of all U3A material to reflect this new image. Many people locally and nationally find the 'University' bit of our title off putting; maybe this will help address this issue. We will wait and see.



Beautiful Lydney Park  
Page 5



Walking in May  
Page 8

Talking of community, remember it will be the 'Glastonbury Festival' in a couple of weeks, so be prepared to share the roads and shops with all our extra visitors!

**Liz**

### **Get Well Soon, Janet**

You may have heard that Janet Murray, our Outings and Solo group organiser has recently been in hospital. We wish Janet a speedy recovery and send our very best wishes to her. I am sure everyone will rally around and understand that some of the plans Janet has made may have to be changed or postponed. We look forward to welcoming Janet back and enjoying her company when she is fit and well again. In the meantime, please check your emails for outing and group news and pass on these details to those who you know are not linked in.

Many thanks go to Gill Wetherall for taking over the arrangements for the recent trip to Slimbridge.

## **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.

### **6 June**

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

### **4 July**

**Mr Richard Pawson:** The Great Siege of Malta often referred to as the Last Battle of the Crusades

### **8th August**

**Please note this meeting has been rescheduled to the second Thursday in August but still in the Council Chamber**

**Ian Keys:** The Bowlsh Heritage Project: A talk on the current study into the history of Shepton Mallet hamlets Darshill, Ham and Bowlsh

### **5th September**

**Ian Keys:** Trekking in Machu Pichu, Peru

### **May Speaker Meeting**

In May, we welcomed Mr Andrew McElwee to talk about his time as manager of the National Trusts', Polesden Lacey Estate at Great Bookham in Surrey. Andrew's talk was entitled "Working behind the Scenes of the National Trust", an amusing, tongue-in-cheek account of some of his most memorable experiences during his years as estate manager of one of the National Trusts' most popular properties.

Andrew is currently living in Sherborne but had lived in Canterbury, working as a surveyor, when he read an advert for a live-in job as coordinating manager at Polesden Lacey. He hastily compiled a C.V., applied for the position, attended a successful interview with his wife and was accepted for the post. The estate had been owned by Captain Ronald Greville and his wife, the Edwardian hostess, Mrs Margaret Greville where she had entertained celebrities and royalty including King Edward VII and the Queen of Spain. Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, spent her honeymoon at Polesden Lacey describing it as, "A Delicious House".

Andrew spoke of the first time he organised the annual summer festival which took place on the front lawn of the house and included a concert and firework display with an expected audience of over 3,000. The local animal rights activists got wind of what was about to take place and were concerned about the local wildlife if fireworks were to be included, and threatened to boycott the event. Andrew contacted the local police who told him not to worry as they would double the police presence to two officers instead of one as in previous years. However, there were black clouds and heavy rain on the night of the festival so half the audience did not attend and the animal rights activists were nowhere to be seen so, apart from the weather, all happily went according to plan.

When Andrew took on the estate manager's role, the fine art treasures of the house had all been locked away following a burglary and theft of an eight inch high solid bronze bull statuette, a gift to Mrs Greville from the Queen of Spain. He decided that these works of art should be on display to the visiting public so arranged for a sophisticated burglar alarm system to be installed as protection. All this took place and all was well until, at three o'clock one morning, the burglar alarm went off. Andrew, without his glasses, together with his house manager without his teeth finally managed, in the dark, to enter the code and disarm the alarm. They had worried that a burglar was still on the premises but found, eventually, that a bat from the estate woodland had got into the building and triggered the alarm.

In 1995, the Trusts' centenary year, he held a couple of meetings with the staff and volunteers who worked on the estate in order to hear of any improvements they felt could be made. At the end of the first meeting, just a single suggestion came from a female member of staff who thought it would be a nice gesture for the workers to have a piece of cake at tea break. Andrew said he would investigate it and see what he could do. When the second meeting took place, he read the text of a letter he had supposedly written to Prince Charles who was patron of the centenary year. It reads as follows:

*Your Royal Highness, I offer you deepest felicitations in this our centenary year from all the revolting stewards, house staff, serfs and volunteers at Polesden Lacey. We all wish that you grant your royal assent to our humble stewards in their all too short official tea-break, a*



Andrew McElwee (right) with Speaker Meeting Organiser, Pete Norman

*delicious morsel of home-made cake. Perchance you would ask your Mum to visit the Buck-House kitchen to locate the recipe of the sponge cake that Queen Vicky must have knocked up just when the National Trust first started. I do not refer to King Alfred.*

*P.S. Have you had the time to ask your Gran if she knows where she put the plug to the bath, when she was here on honeymoon, as it is playing havoc with the ablutionary requirements of my dear lady wife and the dog?*

Amazingly, Prince Charles responded with this short note:

*Many thanks for your felicitations and Camillarrations. I'm sorry that your stewards are revolting. Mamma is of no use to you as she is besotted with low calorie barley water and tasteless cottage cheese. Grandmamma is a real godsend as she dotes on cake. She cannot remember what happened to your bath plug so she has asked Auntie Maggie to call in to B&Q on her way down to the off licence. She remembers having her big toe stuck up the bath tap as they had to send for the royal plumber who, Grandmamma says, had a real struggle as he was blindfolded for royal privacy.*

*Yours Charles R.*

*P.S. Do give them their cake, just one piece each mind you, British standard size.*

Andrew was keen to emphasise that he had given this talk very many times and it is his own personal take on his time at Polesden Lacey, despite all this the National Trust is still thriving. Derek Hiller

### **Last chance to renew your U3A membership!**

Annual membership is **£12** per person from 1 April 2019. 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 are available to download from the website under 'Membership' [sheptonmalletu3a.org.uk](http://sheptonmalletu3a.org.uk) or available at the May Speaker Meeting. 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**

**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

### **Outings**

<b>June</b>	<b>Wednesday 5</b>	<b>Secret World Wildlife Rescue, East Huntspill</b> £3 plus mileage.
	<b>Wednesday 19</b>	<b>Clevedon Pier and Clevedon Court</b> Minibus £9 from Dobbies Pier £2.75, Court and gardens £9, gardens only £5.40
	<b>Tuesday 25</b>	<b>Glastonbury Festival Site</b> 10am coach tour

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

### **Outing to Lydney Park Estate Gardens** by Janet Murray

We all enjoyed our visit on Wednesday 8 May. There were some very dark clouds around, but we were very lucky with the weather. Whereas Shepton had rain nearly all day, we only had a couple of spots. We set off from Shepton at 11.00am, with a very good driver who had checked our route to the Forest of Dean that took about an hour and a half. When we arrived we were shown into the huge dining room, see photo, for our light pre-ordered lunch, then it was off to the woodland area, to see the beautiful rhododendrons and azaleas. What a wonderful display of colour!



Before we left, it was back into the dining room for coffee and cake and our minibus driver was waiting for our 3.45pm start home. It was then we hit the rain(!) arriving back to a very wet Shepton about 5.30pm.

### **Thursday Coffee Mornings**

After some discussion regarding changes at Dobbies, the decision was taken to continue holding the U3A coffee mornings at Dobbies. Janet Murray will not be hosting in future but will come along from time to time. It is hoped that members will continue to meet socially and support these events.

### **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 **June 13, 20, and 27.**

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## **3. Members' Corner**

### **Welcome to all new members.**

If this is your first newsletter we hope you enjoy reading it and find it informative and useful. Your ideas for future editions are always welcome. If you would like to contribute to

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

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#### 4. U3A Regional and National News

**Regional** No notifications

**National** 27-29  
August

##### **U3A Conference and AGM 2019**

**East Midlands Conference Centre, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RJ**

Share views, ideas and experience in this year's conference "**Sharing Inspiring Learning**". With workshops focusing on lifelong learning, managing new educational resources, finance for charities, and supporting the growth and development of U3As, there will opportunity to discuss, debate and enjoy the views of colleagues across the movement. There will also be some free time to share interests such as singing, ukulele playing, walking and many other choices. Please join us for the conference and enjoy time with U3A members from across the movement. Residential and non-residential options for conference are available; costs range from £115.00 to £325.00 includes AGM day. Day only tickets are also available.

[www.u3a.org.uk/events](http://www.u3a.org.uk/events)

11-13  
September **Summer School Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, GL7 6JS**

Tuesday 10 September to Friday 13 September 2019. [See U3A website](#) for courses and booking

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

##### **Music Appreciation Group.**

For our May meeting the theme was for music associated with the letter **M** for May. Our mixed choices of music, with a few helpings of Mozart, started with Lesley Garrett singing the Aria Voi Che Sapete from The Marriage of Figaro, with the Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Andrew Greenwood. This comic opera was first performed in Vienna in 1786. This was followed by Rag-Mazurka from Les Biches. A one act ballet to music composed by Francis Poulenc and performed by the Ulster Orchestra conducted by Yan Pascal Tortelier. The ballet has no story and depicts the random interactions of a group of mainly young people in a house party on a summer afternoon. We then listened to Agnus Dei from the Requiem Mass by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart with the New Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Rafael Fruhbeck de Burgos. Mozart composed part of the Requiem in Vienna in late 1791, but it was unfinished at his death on 5 December the same year. A completed version by Franz Xaver Sussmayr was dated 1792. This was followed by a piano version of Gabriel's Oboe - the main theme for the 1986 film The Mission, directed

by Roland Joffé, written by Italian composer Ennio Morricone and performed by Swiss-Chinese pianist See Siang Wong.

We then heard Minuet, the third movement of A Downland Suite from the 1932 composition for brass band by English Composer John Ireland. The piece has also been arranged for string orchestra and various other instruments. John Ireland wrote the work for the National Brass Band Championship of Great Britain.

This was followed by Menuetto, the third Movement of Mozart's Symphony Number 39, the first of a set of three (his last symphonies) that Mozart composed in rapid succession during the summer of 1788 aged 32. No. 39 was completed on 26 June, No. 40 on 25 July and No. 41 on 10 August, performed by Orchestra Di Padova E Del Veneto and conducted by Peter Maag and then, Meditation, a symphonic intermezzo from the opera Thaïs by French composer Jules Massenet. This piece was written for solo violin and orchestra and was performed by Nigel Kennedy with the National Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Richard Bonyngé. Our next piece was the Intermezzo from Cavalleria Rusticana, from the opera in one act by Italian composer Pietro Mascagni. The opera premiered on 17 May 1890 at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome. We then heard Missa Criolla, composed in 1964, by Argentine composer Ariel Ramírez. The composition marked the beginning of a period of high musical productivity for the composer. It was sung by the Muungano National Choir of Kenya with soloist Jose Carreras.

Our final piece was The Rose, written by Amanda McBroom an American singer and lyricist and sung by Irish soprano and harpist Mary O'Hara. The Rose was sung by Bette Midler in the film of the same name and has been covered by many other recording artists.

The next Music Appreciation group meeting is at 2.00pm on Wednesday 12 June when we will have music with a connection to **J** for June.

### **Woolcraft**

The Woolcraft Group have recently been making items with a sheep theme and have been taking them to the Shepton Mallet Tourist Information Centre to be sold with the proceeds being split between the centre and the person making the items having the cost of making them. There are embroidered cards and soft toy sheep. At present we have spaces for two more members of the group and interested people who work in wool (whatever craft you like) can contact our group leader, Pam whose details are at the end of the newsletter.



### Walking in May

Members, Joy and Brian who recently moved to Bradford on Avon, invited us to join in a walk around the town. Taking us via pretty back streets, we saw the stunning tithe barn then had a pleasant walk along the canal to the historic bridge, returning to their lovely new home where we had a picnic lunch in the garden. Thank you to you both, Joy and Brian, for your kind hospitality and welcome refreshments.



Our second May walk took us over the border to Dorset where Wendy and Julia led the group on a beautiful, five mile walk through Sherborne old and new castles with views of the town and its abbey. After walking through the deer park we stopped at the delightful chancel building of St Cuthbert just outside Osborne before returning to the town for lunch.



**St Cuthbert's Chancel**



**We nearly lost Pet in a barley field!**



### Table Tennis

Pam has decided to stand down from co-leading the Table Tennis Group. Pam has been co-leading the group for the past two and a half years, has been involved with the group since its inception and has played a large part in its continuing success. Peter will continue to lead the group. Many thanks Pam for all the time and effort it has taken to deal with the admin issues and organisation of the group. You will be missed.

### Monthly Activities

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
<b>Monday</b>	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
<b>Tuesday</b>	Book Group 10.15am Bridge 2pm Table Tennis 2pm Flower Club 2pm	Collectables 11am Table Tennis 2pm Bridge 2pm Needlecraft 2pm Recorder Playing 2pm	Bridge 2pm Table Tennis 2pm	Family History 10.30 Table Tennis 2pm Bridge 2pm Needlecraft 2pm Recorder Playing 2pm
<b>Wednesday</b>		Music Appreciation 2pm		
<b>Thursday</b>	Speaker Meeting 10.30am	Coffee 10.30am Scrabble 2pm	Shorter Walks Coffee 10.30am Strollers 1.30pm	Coffee 10.30am Scrabble 2pm
<b>Friday</b>	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](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>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 Pleasure</b>	Val Sherring
<b>Shorter Walks</b>	Jenny Wehrfritz
<b>Solos</b>	Janet Murray
<b>Strollers</b>	Lyn Hook
<b>Table Tennis 1 and 2</b>	Peter Howell
<b>Walking</b>	Liz Weeks
<b>Woolcraft</b>	Pam Mitchell
<b>Writing for Pleasure</b>	Catherine Wylie

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## 6. Committee Members

<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. Please send all your items for inclusion in the next newsletter by 20<sup>th</sup> of the month, thank you.