

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



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1. Chat from the Chair

There is a Thesaurus English (UK) facility on this old, desktop computer that I use and it shows that there are nine other words that have the same meaning as 'change'. This October may provide more change than usual! The transformation of the leaves to fiery, autumn colours is something which we expect and look forward to seeing. The adjustment of our clocks, as we lose British Summer Time, will take place at 2am on 27 October. Those of you with grand parenting duties will know that school half term holidays also fall in the last week of this month, subject to regional variation. However, the biggest difference this month is scheduled to take place on 31 October, who knows if it will happen? I don't imagine there will be a revolution but, if the resulting outcome causes a general election, we may see a variation to our speaker meeting date in November if MDC requires the use of the chamber on the first Thursday for polling. Who knows?

Change has already occurred for one of our members - Lesley Clark, who made a considerable contribution to the success of SMU3A during her time on the committee. Lesley, a previous Treasurer and Secretary (sometimes both at once!) has made a move to Cornwall and she has written a letter to us all with her thoughts and reminiscences of her time in Shepton and of joining SMU3A. I think the contents (which you can read on page 5) encompass all that we strive to achieve and provide for our members. When we join we begin to take part in activities, then contribute our time to running groups and then perhaps decide to sit on the committee. We thank Lesley for her warm words and wish her contentment and happiness



SMU3A Artists
Page 4



Malcolm takes the triple stile
in style Page 9

as she makes the adjustment of living by the sea, in the South West of England. So, if you are inspired by Lesley's comments and feel a conversion of thought occurring, in which you can see yourself on the committee or fulfilling any other role, either existing or new, then please do get in touch and let me know.

As usual, this 'Chat' has been the subject of much rewriting and modification, so no change there - but you may have noticed that I have managed to include all the nine words similar to 'change' listed in the Thesaurus!

Liz

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.

3 October

Dr James Taylor: Forgotten Art of the Picture Postcard, 1840s to 1950s. An entertaining and informative talk on the subject of artist-drawn comic postcards

7 November

Jenny Ross: The Secret Life of Bats. An informative talk on the work of the Bat Conservation Trust in the United Kingdom and how locally based projects and surveys have helped to increase our knowledge of their habitats

5 December

Mr Barry Edwards: Isambard Kingdom Brunel, an alternative look at his life and work

September Speaker Meeting- Trekking to Machu Picchu by Derek Hiller

The speaker for our September meeting was Ian Williamson, a volunteer with St Margaret's Hospice, who gave us an in depth talk about his 2017 trekking experience on the Salkantay Trail to Machu Picchu. Ian was a member of the group from St Margaret's Hospice who took on this fundraising challenge for the hospice and to help with a community project at a school in Sacred Valley in the Andes. The special 'guest' on the trip was a Paddington Bear, armed with plenty of marmalade sandwiches, who travelled along with one of the ladies from the hospice group.

The group set off from Yeovil to Heathrow for an early morning flight to Lima and a one night stay in the Manhattan Hotel where they were joined by others who were doing the same fundraising challenge before the group, which now numbered twenty six, took a flight the following day to Cusco. After spending some leisure time in Cusco town, acclimatising at 3,800 metres above sea level, they made their way, the following morning, to the school in Sacred Valley which had been an ancient Inca settlement where maize was once grown to make a fermented drink known as Chicha.

For the next two days, as part of the community project, the group spent their time cleaning and painting the walls of the junior school. The group wore their yellow St Margaret's Hospice T-shirts contrasting somewhat with the shade of shocking pink paint that was used to paint the walls inside and out. Whilst there they were camped outside the school and were able to get to know the locals and learn about their way of life. They gave gifts of pencils, colouring books and small toys to the children.

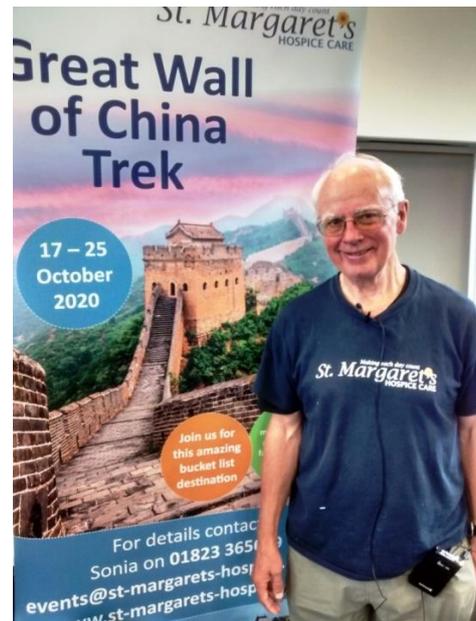
The following day the group made their way along very narrow rough roads to the mountain town of Mollepata for the start of the trek to Machu Picchu. The group were supported by a leader, guides and cooks together with herdsmen with ponies to carry their extra baggage.

The start of the trek was all uphill to an altitude of over 4,000 metres and after a day of hard climbing they set up camp at 4,400 metres in an area with snow-capped mountains in the background.

The following morning, they set off at 7.00am to continue their climb up a zig-zag path another 200 metres to the top of the misty Salkantay Pass. After an hour or so, they started their downward trek to their lunch stop followed by a very strenuous downhill stretch on a rough path with large boulders which Ian found to be one of the most exhausting parts of the trek. It was already dark when they finally arrived at their campsite. After a good night's sleep, they set off again alongside the river in the Salkantay Valley. Due to heavy rain the river was in full torrent so the leader decided to take a wider track away from the river. They soon arrived at a large waterfall over the track and into the gorge below. At this point, the group were advised to remove their boots and paddle across. Ian was following some of the group who had started to make their way across but tripped and dropped one of his boots in the river which sailed off down the gorge. Luckily, Ian had taken a pair of trainers with spare kit in his duffle bag so he had to wear them for the rest of the trek.

During the lunch stop this day they visited a coffee plantation and experienced grinding and brewing their own coffee. The campsite for the night was near some hot springs so the group took advantage of this and spent a couple of hours soaking away their pains which, after several days of trekking, was very welcome. The following morning, after a night of heavy rain with thunderstorms and lightning, some of the more intrepid members of the group decided to go on high zip wires across the gorges. After this adventure, the group continued their trek alongside a railway line heading for Aguas Calientes in the Urubamba river valley and a most welcome night in a hotel. The next day the group had an early start and finally made their way to the Inca city of Machu Picchu and the nearby mountain Wayna Pikchu and by the time they left around lunchtime the place was packed with trekkers and tourists. In the evening they travelled by train and coach back to Cusco which was the end of the hospice trek. Some of the group decided to extend their time in Peru to do an Amazon rainforest trek from Puerto Maldonado. They took a boat trip up the river to the Eco Lodge where they stayed for a few days to explore some of the rainforest itself.

After making their way back to Cusco again they started their long trip home via Lima, for an overnight stay, then on to Heathrow via Amsterdam and finally arrived back in Yeovil.



This trek was one of many fundraising events for Ian who has so far raised £30,000 for the hospice through various treks and running the London Marathon. Ian's future fundraising plans include trips to the Great Wall of China and Kilimanjaro.

Art Display by the SMU3A Art Group

Thank you to the Art Group who brought along their work to the September Speaker Meeting. This is the second time that the talented group of artists have exhibited their work to the membership and shows again what a talented group they are.



Outings

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------------|--|
| October | Wednesday 9 | Donkey Sanctuary, Sidmouth
Minibus £13, free entrance to sanctuary |
| | Thursday 17 | Wincanton Races
First race day of the new season |
| | Wednesday 23 | Horsehair Factory, Castle Cary
John Boyd Textile Ltd weavers of horsehair since 1837. Car sharing, entrance £6 |

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 **October 10, 17, 24 and 31.**

2020 U3A Diaries

The 2020 U3A diaries will be on sale soon, so please place your order for your diary soon. You can order them from Maggie Hardy. See her at the next Speaker Meeting on Thursday 3 October.

3. Members' Corner

Letter from Lesley Clark

I am now settled in my new home, so time to bid farewell to Shepton Mallet U3A. When I moved to Shepton, six plus years ago, I didn't know anyone at all. I decided to visit the local Tourist Information to find out what was going on and they pointed me at SMU3A.

I nervously began to attend speaker meetings, the Dobbies' coffee morning, book group and munch club. At the time there was a vacancy for a secretary to the committee and I couldn't understand why it was proving so hard to find anyone prepared to help, so I volunteered and joined the committee and started to make friends and get involved in your U3A. Subsequently the previous treasurer left and, again, nobody was prepared to take it on. Consequently, for a while I was both secretary and treasurer with Malcolm as chair. I also set up and led the strollers group until later last year when Lyn bravely volunteered.



Eventually, your now super chair, Liz, took on the position of secretary and proved to greatly enhance the role. I continued as treasurer until I came to the decision last year that I would be moving away and time to step down. Jane kindly agreed to take over from me.

The point of this long epistle is to encourage each and every one of you, the membership, to give more support to your U3A by offering to help both the committee and numerous groups who work very hard on your behalf. We have all benefitted from what SMU3A has to offer and I, personally found friendship and hope I made a worthwhile contribution.

Finally, my thanks go to everyone with whom I have become, in some cases, firm friends. So, I'm leaving Shepton with many new friends, fond memories and, of course, my Shepton sheep which was kindly gifted to me when I stepped down as treasurer.

I do hope SMU3A will continue to thrive, but it can only do so with the support of you, the members.

Lesley by Malcolm

I just wanted to say a few words about Lesley Clark who has left Shepton Mallet and returned to Cornwall. Lesley was a member of several groups, started and was group leader of strollers. However, her biggest impact on Shepton Mallet U3A was her service on the committee for several years. Lesley was treasurer and secretary, for some time combining both roles. Without Lesley doing this I doubt that the U3A would have been able to continue as these officer positions are essential. She carried out her duties conscientiously, carefully and quietly without any fanfare. Her biggest dread was having to give the annual financial report which she did so well. Lesley worked hard with me and other committee members as we had to draw up new financial systems to comply with Charity Commission law and National Office guidelines and I was very grateful for her help and support.

I wish her well for the future and hope she enjoys her new home back in her beloved Cornwall.

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, letters, Castaway choices, articles, reminiscences, local history, photographs, events etc to the editor by 20th of the month.

Castaway



This month's Castaway to our desert island is Peter Howell.

Many of you will know that Peter was a founding member of SMU3A and our first chairperson. Peter had huge difficulty deciding on the final seven musical choices. He says they would all quite probably be different if he was asked again today!

1. Every Time we Say Goodbye - Ella Fitzgerald (Still the best)
2. One Last Dance - Badly Drawn Boy (Lyric - Eyes so kind and smile so bright - that is my wife, Pat)
3. Guadeloupe - Tom Russell (Is there a God - Concert in Bethesda)
4. Cowboy Boots - Kendel Carson (Every girl needs a sugar daddy)
5. Volver Volver Buika (Saw a ballet version of this - mesmerising)
6. Queen of Denmark - Sinead O'Connor (I want to run down the beach screaming the lyrics and doing some moderate head-banging!)
7. John Field - Nocturne No.1 in E Flat Major played by Miceal O'Rourke (Just to calm me down afterwards).

Book - The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

Luxury item - has to be my Amazon Alexa (courtesy of a solar panel miraculously washed up and still working) and hopefully some of Frank's whisky, left behind after he was rescued!

4. U3A Regional and National News

Regional See Photographic Competition details below

National No notifications

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 U3A email newsletter.

FLASH!

BANG!

WALLOP!

WHAT A PHOTOGRAPIC COMPETITION!

Entries are invited for the NSA (North Somerset Association of U3As)

The closing date for the area competition is 1 March 2020 with the exhibition and prize giving on the 17 April 2020 at Wells Museum.

Entries from Shepton Mallet snappers should be sent to Maggie Hardy, Secretary SMU3A (see below) by 31 December 2019 so that our members can select the best 10 to go forward to the final judging in Wells, that gives everyone plenty of time. There will be a fee of £1 per entrant.

The rules are quite simple:

The competition is open to all U3A members in the NSA region.

1. Entries must be original work and not previously entered into a photographic competition.
2. Copyright remains with the owner who, by entering the competition, grants a licence for the purposes of the competition (including publicity)
3. A maximum of 10 entries per U3A
4. The Judge's decision will be final.

Class 1: Prints - colour or black and white - can be taken by camera, mobile phone etc. and should be mounted on a maximum sized mount of 11.3/4" x 8. ¼". Any size of photograph is permitted.

Class 2: Digital Images on CD or memory stick. Colour or black and white. These should be presented either on a CD Or memory stick.

The competition's theme is **Forms in Nature** which covers a wide spectrum.

It will culminate with an exhibition of entries on Friday 17 April 2020 from 2-4pm at Wells Museum, then the results will be announced and the prizes awarded.

Entry to the exhibition and prize giving will be £2 (payable on the day) and will include refreshments.

There will be updates in future newsletters and for more information please contact the Secretary (Maggie Hardy).

Please support your Shepton U3A and let's have a good show of pictures. You don't need to be Lord Snowdon, just pictures which fit the theme and you have enjoyed taking and looking at, which have made you smile, laugh - or cry!

5. Group News

NEW

French Conversation Group

We have had a lovely offer from a lady, originally from France and now living in Oakhill, who is willing to run a French Conversation group for U3A.

This would be purely a conversation group rather than the two groups we originally had and would not involve any homework! Dates and venue would be arranged when I know how many people are interested.

Please would you let me know if you are interested and I can take this further.

Sue Dunne Group Coordinator

Bridge

As you may know we have a Bridge Group within SMU3A.

If any member is interested in joining the group, we meet on Tuesdays at 2pm at Douling Village Hall. Contact Graham McCartney, group leader for more information.

...if you would like to learn to play bridge, there is a chance to learn with Caroline Macpherson, who runs weekly lessons from her home in Hardway, near Bruton on Mondays at 11am till 12.30pm.

There are only two places available, so contact me as soon as possible and I will get Caroline to contact you.

Janet Murray.

Strollers

Strollers met for their last walk of the season in Wells when Lyn lead us around the cathedral. A few of us had a guided tour of the cathedral a while ago and decided we would like to go back and just have a walk around under our own steam to see a bit more of the interior. Tea and cakes in the cathedral cafe went down well after our visit. Lyn says that



although it was our last walk of the year there's nothing to stop us meeting up in October if you're so inclined! Contact Lyn Hook if you are inclined.

Walking



The Walking Group had a beautiful sunny morning for our walk on the Longleat Estate, starting with the wonderful view from Heaven's Gate and taking in woodland, parkland and the picturesque village of Horningsham which as well as a parish church has the Presbyterian thatched church built in 1566 for the Scottish masons who came to build Longleat House over a 12 year period. The church is extremely unusual with a gallery, one side for the women and the opposite for the men, with hat pegs for each man on the wall above. We stopped for lunch at the Bath Arms and then walked through the gilded gates on to the driveway to Longleat House and across the park passing a 2nd World War pill-box before crossing the bridge over Capability Brown's water system and the ascent back to the start of our walk.

September's Second Walk

Starting and finishing from the Horse and Jockey in Binegar, this will forever be known as



the stile walk as we crossed a numerous number the 'highlight' being a triple! It was a misty start but the morning brightened and we were able to see lovely views from Maesbury Castle



Group Leaders and Committee Annual Lunch

Thank you to Sue Dunne for organising this year's Group Leaders and Committee lunch at Peppers in Shepton Mallet. The annual lunch is a thank you to all our group leaders for their tireless work keeping the groups going and to the committee members for their hard work over the year.



Monthly Activities

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Monday	Walking	Discussion 10.30am Bowls 11am Art 2-4pm	Walking 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	Bridge 2pm Table Tennis 2pm	Family History 10.30am Table Tennis 2pm Bridge 2pm Needlecraft 2pm Recorder Playing 2pm
Wednesday	Short Tennis 2pm	Short Tennis 2pm Music Appreciation 2pm	Short Tennis 2pm	Short Tennis 2pm
Thursday	Speaker Meeting 10.30am	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
Discussion	Malcolm Weeks
Family History	Keith Taylor
Flowers	Freda Briars
Munch Club	Maggie Fowle
Music	Catherine Wylie
Appreciation	Sandra Freeborn
Needlecraft	Di Gommo Liz Weeks
Recorders	Sandra Morris Julie Newman
Scrabble	Di Gommo
Singing for Pleasure	Val Sherring
Shorter Walks	Jenny Wehrfritz
Short Tennis	Eric Wehrfritz

Solos	Janet Murray
Strollers	Lyn Hook
Table Tennis	Peter Howell
1 and 2	
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 Coordinator	Sue Dunne
Membership Secretary	Maggie Fowle
Newsletter	Julia Goddard
Outings	Janet Murray
Speakers	Pete Norman
Website	Keith Taylor

Thank 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.