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1. Chat from the Chair

It is the season of lists - lists of things to do, dates to remember, things to buy and a plan of how and when to fit them in to an already busy diary. This is also the case with this December edition of the Newsletter, Julia, our Editor requests that all news and photos are with her by the 20th of the month. So, we hope that you will find the time to open and read it, perhaps with a cup of tea and a mince pie (must add 'make mince pies' to the list). If your group or activity never seems to put in appearance in print, then take a photo next time you meet and add a couple of lines to tell us what you have achieved during the year or are planning for the future and send it to Julia.

Everyone is welcome to the Peter Street rooms for the last Speaker meeting of this year on Thursday, 5 December when our guest, Mr Barry Edwards offers us an alternative look at the life and work of Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Mince pies (not mine!) will be available to have with your tea or coffee, so please, do come along and feed both body and soul! And more mince pies will be available at the Singing for Pleasure Christmas celebration of Carols and Festive music at 10.30.am on Friday 20 December in the Salvation Army Hall.

Wherever you are this Christmas, home or away, with friends or family or quietly remembering past Christmases, the committee and I hope you have a peaceful and happy Christmas time.

Best wishes, Liz



Collectables
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Mince pies
Everywhere

2. What's On SPEAKER MEETING

Change of venue

Due to preparations for the general election the Council Chamber is not available for the December Speaker Meeting. Instead it will be held at the Peter Street Rooms, Peter Street, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5BL

5 December

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

Free tea, coffee and mince pies will be provided at our festive meeting



The hall will be open at 10a.m. It can be accessed for those who don't know from Town Street which runs from Market Cross to the steps. Pass through an alley way next to no. 12 where 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.

We return to the Council Chamber in the New Year.

Speaker Meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month from 10.00 until 11.45. FREE tea and coffee is 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.

2 January 2020

Dave Hooker: V2 Rockets on London 1944-1945

6 February

Christopher Forrester: The story of the West Country Mail Coach system London to Exeter via Wincanton

5 March

Tim Bruce: 'Changing things one pedal at a time' an epic cycle journey of over 3500 miles from Seattle to Washington DC in aid of charity

November Speaker Meeting by Derek Hiller

The speaker for our November meeting was Jenny Ross with a talk entitled, 'The Secret Life of Bats'.

Jenny is an ecologist living and working in Somerset and is passionate about conservation and protection of the bat population in the UK. She has supported the work of several conservation groups including the Somerset Wildlife Trust and the Bat Conservation Trust. Jenny spoke about the eighteen species of bats resident in the UK, some of the most diverse group of mammals in the world and the only true flying mammal. Seventeen of these known species can be found in Somerset and Wiltshire including the Brown and Grey Long Eared bats being one of our rarest species and Pipistrelles the most common and smallest. Other groups include Barbastelles, Bechsteins, Natterers, Noctules and Serotines.

One of the most well-known bats is the Horseshoe bat with its distinctive horseshoe shaped nose. It is one of the only bats to hang when roosting unlike most others that nest in trees and buildings.

Among the Myotis group of bats is Jenny's favourite the Daubenton's bat, not least because it has hairy feet and feeds over water scooping and grabbing insects from the surface with its feet.

The various bats have many defining features – the size and shape of their ears or nose, tails or feet, give clues on how they are identified.

When searching for food, bats use a form of echo location and we listened to several recordings of the different frequencies used in the sound of their echo. Some are

particularly high-pitched and others very much lower. Again, the Horseshoe bat has its own very distinctive continual song like echo.

We heard about the different places where bats live. Although they move around frequently, generally they prefer a cool damp environment like caves and mines; a good reason for their abundance in the South West. A colony of Pipistrelles, however, was found recently to have bucked the trend by hibernating in a National Trust property with a very dry and open environment. Many types of buildings are used like an old warehouses or farm buildings. We were shown pictures and videos of bats in various locations including a large colony of Horseshoe bats in a purpose built maternity roost in Devon and a family of bats nesting in a hollow tree.

Bats tend to mate during September and October and hibernate from December to February. In the summer months females will be giving birth in the warm roof voids which are a popular choice to rear their young, known as pups. They will occasionally move around to find a place with a more comfortable temperature.

Bats do most of their foraging at night and will roost during the day, spending their time cleaning and preening and socialising within the group.

All bats are protected under European and British legislation and remain one of our most endangered species.

The work of the Bat Conservation Trust and their supporters will, hopefully, help to maintain the numbers of these amazing creatures in the UK.



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 **December 12 and 19. Dobbies is closed on Boxing Day.**

Outings

December	Wednesday 4	Christmas Buffet Lunch and Skittles Britannia Inn, Bath Road, Wells Meet at 12.15pm to eat at 12.30pm. Skittles after lunch. Approx £7pp. We will be having a raffle, so please bring any suitable items.
January	Wednesday 15	January Sales in Bristol Minibus from Dobbies at 9.30am to arrive at Bristol bus station, approximately 10.45am. Debenhams restaurant at 12.30pm for lunch if required. Bus station at 4.00pm to arrive back in Dobbies by 5.30pm. The cost of the minibus is £12.70pp

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

2020 U3A Diaries

The 2020 U3A diaries are now on sale, so please place your order with Maggie Hardy or see her at the next Speaker Meeting on Thursday 5 December.

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

Thank you to Barry Holmes who has sent in his poem to Members' Corner. Walking group take note!

Advice to a Rambling Group

When you're lost and walking in the rain
and your map's a soggy mess,
don't cry or moan and give up hope,
just use your G.P.S.

On mountain tops or valleys deep
and your position is just a guess,
don't start a scare by sending a flare
just use your G.P.S.

When someone asks you what you'd like

for your birthday or X-Mes [sorry]
don't ask for socks or even "rocks"
demand a G.P.S.

If you want to know the best way home
then its buttons you should press
not the ones on your mobile phone
but the ones on your G.P.S.

When a fella' tries to give a girl
a kiss or sweet caress,
she shouldn't ask him "HOW DARE YOU"
But "Do you own a G.P.S?"

If all them satellites in the sky
should fail, - oh what a mess,
it's them that does the work you know-
they work the G.P.S.

If you want to know just where you are
to a yard or even less
don't look at maps, it's best perhaps
to use your G.P.S.

Your G.P.S. won't let you down
They're great and that is that,
I tried to use mine yesterday
and found the battery flat.

Castaway

Thanks go to John Boston this month and we will make
sure he is rescued in time to spend Christmas with his
family.

John takes part in our walking group and also plays
short tennis. His musical choices were rushed through
as there was a danger he would change his mind.
Please note John's Book Choice!



1. Serenade to a Cuckoo - Jethro Tull or Roland Kirk
2. Jessica - The Allman Brothers live at Florida (listen on youtube and you will instantly recognise this piece of music!)
3. Silver Spire - Leon Hunt on banjo at Cambridge folk festival
4. Boogie Wonderland -Earth Wind and Fire
5. Take me in Lifeboat - Flatt and Scruggs
6. Route 66 - Rolling Stones (or Billy Bragg "Go motoring on the A13")
7. Chaconne (JS Bach) - played by Yehudi Menuhin as a 16 year old.
(One to rescue from the waves)

Book - Kon Tiki by Thor Heyerdahl
Luxury item - my fiddle, in a weatherproof floating case.

Research Project can you help?

We have received a request for members to assist in a research project run by Sheffield University and funded by the British Academy. It is on thoughts and music that appear unintentionally in the mind and how their characteristics might change across the adult lifespan. The study is addressed to people over 60 years old and is based on a smart phone application for Android phones or tablets. They are interested in your experiences of "earworms"; music that appears in the mind involuntarily and repeatedly, if they are frequent or not so frequent. Even if you don't have these experiences, you can still participate in the study. You will be asked to download an application on your phone or tablet and complete a short questionnaire (each one takes about a minute to complete) in response to eight push notifications per day for four days. All your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. Your contribution will be invaluable and your help is much appreciated as responses will help them understand how everyday thoughts unfold as we age. You will be notified about the results of the study as soon as their findings become publicly available. Your contribution to science could also win you a £5 Amazon voucher. If you are interested in taking part contact Dr Georgina Floridou, Music and Wellbeing Research Unit, University of Sheffield musichemispheres@gmail.com

4. U3A Regional and National News

Regional	Closing date end January	Photographic Competition Forms in Nature see below
	27 March 2020	Inter U3A Quiz Wells Date for your diaries, 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.

Photographic Competition

There has been a rather disappointing response to the North Somerset Association's Photographic Competition. Each U3A may submit 10 entries to the competition. With the closing date of end of December looming, we have only received 4! We have decided to delay the deadline to the end of January to give you time over the festive season to have a look through your albums, mobile phones, i-pads or computers for something suitable on the theme of nature, which gives a very wide spectrum. Even better, you could get out and about with your favoured means of taking pictures.

I look forward to seeing your pictures soon. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further information. See October and November newsletters for full entry details. Happy Christmas and happy snapping. Maggie Hardy, Secretary, Shepton Mallet U3A.

Inter U3A Quiz

The Northern Somerset Association of U3As is holding another quiz. It will be on Friday 27 March 2020 at Wells Golf Club at 1.30, for a prompt start at 2pm, until 5pm.

We have entered two teams of four, to include a cream tea.

Prizes provided by NSA of U3As.

If you would like to take part please give your name to

Maggie Hardy, Secretary as soon as possible

As the Quiz is not until the end of March, we will check with you nearer the time as to your availability. If more than eight members come forward, then it will be names out of the hat!



5. Group News

NEW!

Photography Group

We hope to start a photography group in the New Year thanks to a kind offer by a Camelot U3A member who is prepared to lead the group. Everyone is welcome to join, whether you are a complete beginner or have some experience. Whether you take pictures with a mobile phone, a compact digital camera, a DSLR or film camera doesn't matter. You just need to like taking and/or viewing photos.

During the winter months we would start by suggesting a subject of the month: Christmas, snow, architecture etc. More experienced members might be able to suggest ways of improving your photographic images.

We plan to meet monthly, possibly at the Shrubbery Hotel.

If you are interested please contact Sue Dunne.

Singing for Pleasure Group

The Singing for Pleasure group will be holding their December meeting at 10.30.am on Friday 20 December in the Salvation Army Hall. All are welcome come along and join in with our Christmas celebration of carols and festive music.



Time to dust off those Christmas hats and jumpers and come along and get into the festive spirit. There will be coffee and mince pies to round things off so please do come and join us!



Bridge

The Bridge Group is led by Graham McCartney who can be contacted directly. Graham is ably assisted by willing members of the group turning up a few minutes early to help out with setting up the weekly Tuesday sessions in Doultling Village Hall, in particular Joan Bennet who also takes over as an alternative session director in Graham's absence. The new winter meeting times will be 1:30pm in Doultling Village Hall.

As the group has recently lost four members and gained only one during the year, we now

sit with 15 members, although records show that on average only 10 turn up. [Less than seven leads to cancelled sessions at short notice and more than 16 (can now never happen) leads to logistical complications.] An average of 12 is actually the ideal number for a relaxed three table session of social duplicate bridge for all members at all levels of playing experience from beginners to the more accomplished players. Results show that with randomly selected pairs there is little difference in the scoring of individual members from week to week, so our little group matches the U3A ethos of being both a learning and a teaching experience for all players. With just a few days' notice we will gladly accept any new permanent or temporary members at our sessions for the princely subscription fee of just £1 which includes tea or coffee and biscuits at half time. Graham McCartney

Collectables

Salt, mustard, vinegar, pepper - do you remember this rhyme? We took this as the theme for our November Collectables meeting. The photo shows a section of cruet sets, with the exception of the binoculars and the pair of glass salts, they are all examples of Carlton Ware. These sets were pretty additions to the table in the years between 1930 and the 1960s, but sadly rarely making an appearance these days.



French Conversation

The French Conversation Group is now up and running on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at 10.30 in the Shrubbery Hotel. If you would like to join the group please contact Beatrice Thayer.

Walking West Lydford and the River Brue by Wendy Williams

We started at West Lydford which was very pretty with some lovely properties. We went along the River Brue to the Mill at the Brue where the picture was taken. We came back via the golf course and crossed a railway (all safely!) and had a very nice lunch at the pub in Lydford which is quite quirky.



Chewton Mendip Walk by Gill Norman

14 walkers and 14 stiles (although in the end it was only 12 stiles thanks to Frank's gate opening skills - fortunately there were still 14 walkers at the finish!). We parked up at the Waldegrave Arms in Chewton Mendip and were ready to go by 9.30 am. In the end it was a lovely sunny autumn morning in spite of the heavy storms of the previous week. Predictably there was plenty of mud and standing water about, but nothing to rival Frank's long held mud record. The walk was about 5.3 miles of "undulating" terrain (a wonderful word for describing three steep "ups" and one very steep "up", not to mention the "downs"). Overall a fairly strenuous walk with the mud and stiles thrown in (including 1 triple stile and a couple of doubles, one with a huge step up, particularly for those of us who are vertically challenged!).

There was quite a bit along generally fairly quiet lanes requiring extra care in terms of other road users and in two instances in terms of puddle depth. Chris did a great job as back marker, ably assisted by Margaret.

Frank was at the ready to deal with the bull in one field and nosy yearlings in the other



Walking towards Litton



Over looking Chew Valley Lake



Bubbling brook at Watery Combe



Under the Tulip Tree

which I had encountered on the "recce" four weeks ago. But word had got round and today we didn't meet any livestock other than a couple of gorgeous Shetland ponies as we crossed the field behind Litton church. We meandered through the pretty village then it was time for another "up" after which we were rewarded with wonderful views of Chew Valley Lake in the autumn sunshine. Through the pheasant enclosure (although they had all mysteriously disappeared today) which afforded a handy spot for "comfort breaks" for various members of our party and it into Ford Lane, then another steep "up" over two water logged but cattle-free fields gave us more opportunity for slithering and sliding about. We made it to the top relatively unscathed before descending again into Watery Combe. A slight detour was made to visit the site where the spring bubbles up through a tree's roots, then the final and steepest "up" on the other side of the combe. A group sigh of relief as Chewton Mendip church comes into view.

We had made excellent time and were able to look around inside the church and search the graveyard (unsuccessfully) for Joyce Grenfell's headstone which we were reliably (?) informed stands there and then down the footpath and back into the pub car park.

Those of us who stayed for lunch enjoyed large portions of good food and really needed to repeat the walk to "walk it off" afterwards!

Thank you all for coming and stoically conquering those "undulations".

November Wookey Walk by John Smith

Pet and I led a 5 ml walk around the Burcott Mill and Coxley Wick area. Blessed with good weather and minimal mud the number of stiles was the only minor drawback! However, everyone completed the assault course and will be awarded their green berets later this year.



'Dedicated to the dairymen who once farmed in this parish'

Discussion Group

This month we discussed climate change and the role the UK could play in reversing global warming and climate change. One member brought along an excerpt from a paper by Professor Richard Tol of Sussex University after he had reviewed 14 different studies of future climate trends and found that so far climate change has done more good than harm and it wouldn't be until 2080 that this trend would be reversed. This flies counter to what we hear almost daily on the news. What we do know is that CO2 levels are at the highest for 3 million years, recent years have been warmest on record. 11% of carbon emissions are caused by deforestation, 1 million hectares of the coastal ecosystem are lost each year and coastal mangroves capture ten times as much carbon as tropical (e.g. Amazon) forests. 11% of the world population is vulnerable to climate change.

We recognised that the UK had a significant role in kick starting the problem – being the home of the industrial revolution. It is not easy to start now lecturing developing countries. We discussed whether we should lead by example or are we such an insignificant player both in terms of population and harmful emissions that we don't need to be concerned. The country has moved away from fossil fuels and stepped up green energy production. In recent years the UK has planted over 13500 hectares of woodland (although over 11000 of those have been in Scotland).

We could all examine our energy usage be it by buying local, driving less, and other methods. This lead on to the suggestion that next month we discuss 'Vegetarianism ' as animal emissions are a contributory factor in methane production.

Check your carbon footprint at www.conservation.org/carbon-footprint-calculator

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 French conversation 10.30 Bridge 1.30pm Table Tennis 2pm Flower Club 2pm	Collectables 11am Table Tennis 2pm Bridge 1.30pm Needlecraft 2pm Recorder Playing 2pm	French conversation 10.30 Bridge 1.30pm Table Tennis 2pm	Family History 10.30am Table Tennis 2pm Bridge 1.30pm Needlecraft 2pm Recorder Playing 2pm
Wednesday	Short Tennis 4-5pm	Music Appreciation 2pm Short Tennis 4-5pm	Short Tennis 4-5pm	Short Tennis 4-5pm
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
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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
French conversation	Beatrice Thayer
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 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 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. Acknowledgement to Cliparts.co for Christmas art. Please send your items for the newsletter by 20th of the month
Julia Goddard, Editor

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

