



Newsletter

December 2020

sheptonmalletu3a.org.uk



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Chat

Christmas is coming and amongst everything else it heralds the arrival of our December newsletter. Many thanks to everyone who answered the call to submit an item to fill the pages of this issue.

Christmas is always a wonderful celebration in the midst of winter, and it is more than welcome this year as it rounds off the last extraordinary weeks of 2020. None of us will forget the last nine months, and we have much to be thankful for in our small corner of Somerset. Our u3a has navigated virtual enrolment and the AGM and we have held our first on-line substitute speaker meeting. Thank you to Jane for arranging these online talks. Although our group activities remain dormant, we maintain the framework and enthusiasm to rebuild them as soon as we are able.

The recent, positive news about the viability of new vaccines certainly holds the promise that the present lockdowns and restrictions will be coming to an end in the coming months.

Prepare to stand in line and roll up your sleeves!

Christmas 2020 will, quite probably, be less social than any of us

would wish and the only good thing to come out of this will be to reduce our consumption of mince pies which are always in plentiful supply at u3a events during the festive season! Wherever and however you celebrate this Christmas, the committee and I send our very best wishes for your continued good health and a new year that will be safer and more prosperous for us all.

Happy Christmas
Liz

November Speaker Meeting

Thirty Years of Travel in China

As it's not possible to meet in groups at the moment, the committee decided to offer a different sort of speaker meeting this month...online. I chose a travel topic as an antidote to lockdown...and I hope you managed to attend the talk from the comfort of your own home. Not quite the same as meeting together at the Council Chamber, but needs must in these weird times. Registration and logging on for the Mirthy talk is user friendly, but contact me if you need help.



We travelled to China courtesy of the mirthy.co.uk website. The speaker John Rouse started his travels in the 70s with a year's teaching in Hong Kong when only one Chinese city was open to foreigners. But he stayed for more than 30 years in the region and organised trips to many remote areas in the intervening years. His talk included spectacular scenery and memorable experiences, some

quite hair-raising (all well before the current more organised tour industry!) and in the process he showed how China transformed from an insular peasant society to a global superpower.

Please look out for the date and time of the next talk and also look at the [Mirthy website catalogue](#). If you would like to suggest a topic that you think others (and yourself!) might find interesting, please contact Jane Burman

Members' Corner

Thank you to everyone who has sent in items following my plea last month. My email inbox has been busy. Thank you and keep it up! Send me your reminiscences, jokes, recipes, local history, photographs and what you have been

doing instead of your usual u3a activities. Please send them in by the deadline of the 20th of the month. Thank you Julia Goddard, Editor

Seen in Evercreech



December's RECIPE

Malcolm has been cooking during lockdown 2

"I signed up via the BBC to receive emails from **Stay safe, get inspired**. There are lots of interesting snippets and recipes. Here's one I tried that was successful...and easy. It's enough for four but you could freeze."

Sausages with oregano, mushrooms and olives

450g reduced fat (or lean) sausages

1 teaspoon rapeseed oil

2 teaspoon dried oregano

2 cloves garlic

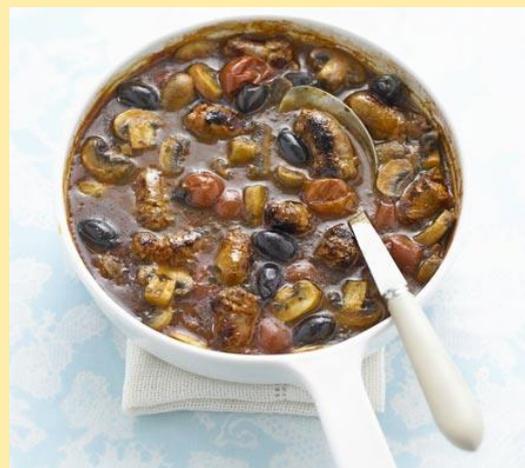
1 tin chopped tomatoes

200 ml beef stock (Oxo)

100g black olives

500g mushrooms (I used just under).

1. Cut sausages into meatball size pieces. Heat pan and fry in the oil for about 5 minutes until golden all over



2. Add oregano & garlic – fry for one more minute. Tip in tomatoes, stock, olives and mushrooms. Stir
3. Simmer for fifteen minutes until sausages cooked through and sauce reduced a little
4. Serve with mashed potatoes.

Enjoy!

Send in your favourite lockdown recipes for us all to savour.



Pretty in Pink

Walking near North Wootton, Wendy found this 'anonymous' plant growing in the hedgerow.

Can you name it?

Jokes and Collett Park autumn photos have been sent in by Barry and Barbara

Where exactly are we?

Two American tourists were giving Wales a good looking at and exploring the wonderful scenery (and who can blame them, it's lovely) and they finally ended up going over the bridge to Anglesey where they were shortly confronted by a place sign which had more letters than the main sorting office of Royal Mail, and they spent over an hour trying to say Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch, but to no avail (and who can blame them). They decided to have a coffee, found a suitable establishment and ordered coffees and Welsh cakes. When the waitress brought the coffees they asked her if she could possibly tell them, clearly and slowly exactly where they were. Certainly I can she replied, 'you are in B-U-R-G-E-R-K-I-N-G'



This potato had three daughters and as he thought that they were all old enough to be married and off his hands he said to the first one, 'Go out into the fields and don't come back until you have found a man potato that you want to marry and I will say yes or no'. Well, she went out into the field and a week later came back and told her father that she had found the potato of her dreams and that he was a King Edward in the next field. Father was delighted to have Royalty in the family and said that yes she could certainly marry him. Then Dad said to daughter number two, 'Off you go daughter number two and find a husband and don't forget that we have royalty in the family.' Off she went and returned after a few days and said that she had found the potato she wanted to marry and that he was a Jersey Royal. Well, Dad was over the moon at the thought of two royal sons in law and said, 'Yes you may certainly marry him.' He rubbed his hands in glee. Then he said to daughter number three, 'It's your turn now, off you go and don't forget that we have Royalty in the family.' Well off she went and returned a week later, her eyes sparkling and so excited that she could hardly tell her father that she had found a most wonderful potato and she just must marry him. Well who is it? asked the Dad, eager to know. The daughter said that it was Desmond Lyneham. 'WHAT?' cried the Dad, 'no you certainly may not marry him, don't forget that we have Royalty in the family now and he's only a commentator.'

Last month's photo puzzle solution

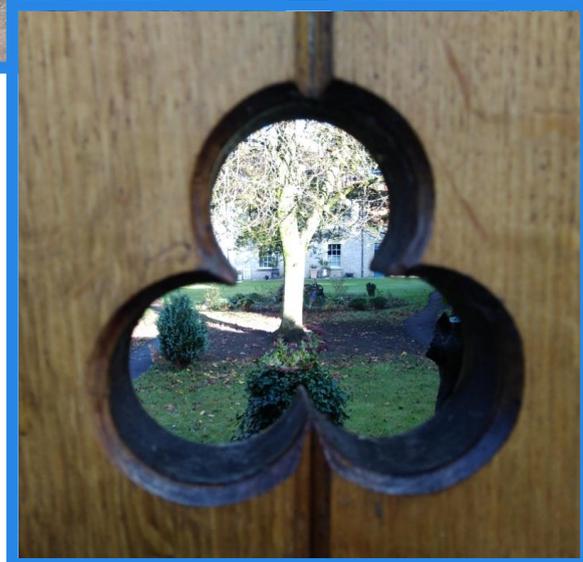
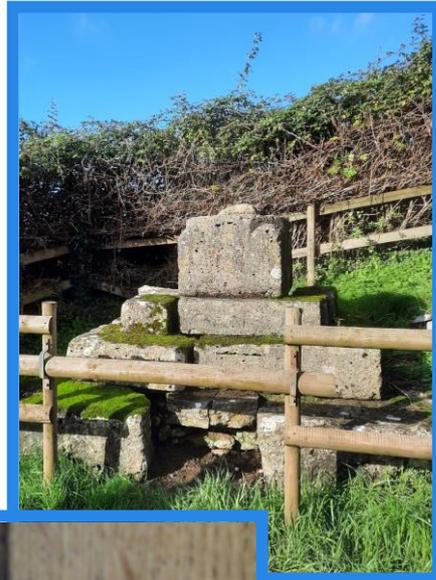
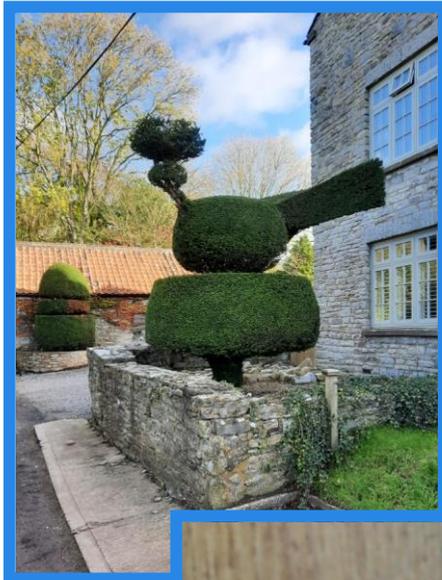
These gates can be seen in West Compton

Last month's photo puzzle

These gates can be seen in W



Do you know where these photographs were taken?
A topiary peacock, an ancient wayside cross and a trefoil aperture





A rare breed...but do you know which?

Local Treasures

As the coronavirus is spreading more rapidly we find ourselves in another lockdown and probable restriction for some time. However, we can still get out to visit our beautiful countryside, including many National Trust properties. The guidelines on travel for exercise are open to interpretation and I think if you have advance booking you are safe. Booking for NT sites opens on Friday for the following week. Check the weather forecast and pick your date and time slot. At the moment shops are closed but drinks and snacks available for takeaway. Toilets also open.

Places within a comfortable drive from Shepton include Montacute, Stourhead, Stonehenge, Tyntesfield and Dyrham Park. All have extensive grounds and are safe places. We enjoyed a day at Dyrham, especially the deer park, Stourhead and Tyntesfield. Pictured here Dyrham and Tyntesfield **Malcolm and Liz**



“Recent events have prompted us to explore our local area close to home and we have discovered Haddon Wood in Alhampton. In 2013, 28 acres of former pastureland was generously donated to the local community and is now managed by the Woodland Trust as a new native woodland. It features open glades, a large pond and a community orchard. The wood is gated and enclosed making it very safe for all family members and is easy walking. The walk could be extended by exiting towards the tin chapel at Alhampton and on to Ditchheat. Car parking areas are near Castle Cary Rugby club , grid reference ST 629345. Friends of Haddon Wood has been set up to assist with maintenance and raise further funding, items for sale include Christmas cards. Further details on facebook page and on the blog at [friends of haddon wood wordpress.com](https://www.friends-of-haddon-wood.wordpress.com)
A very pleasant addition to the local area.”

Jenny and Eric

Bee hive

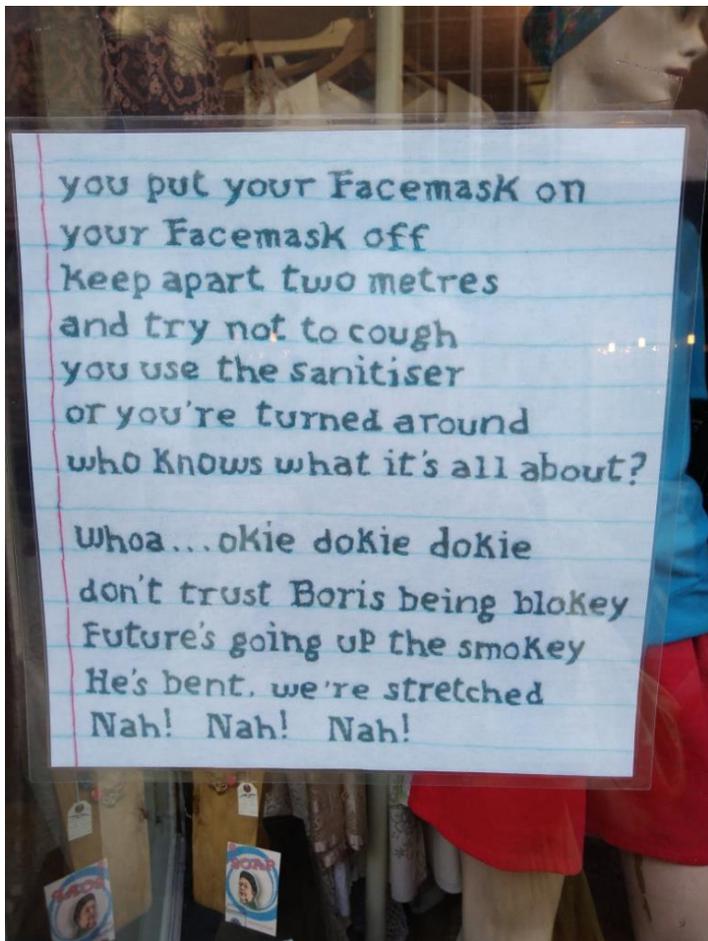


Bug hotel



View of the pond

Seen in Frome–sing along and do the Hokey Cokey



More singing with Val

Hope all is well with everyone. I have been very occupied coping with Archie, my Sheltie puppy who is now seven months old. After a rocky start, we have bonded well, and he certainly gives me a focus during this second lockdown.

Here's an alternative version of the **Twelve days of Christmas** that I saw on Facebook. I found it amusing, but some of you may not!
(It only works if you sing the words to yourself in your head or out loud.)

My true love sent to me...

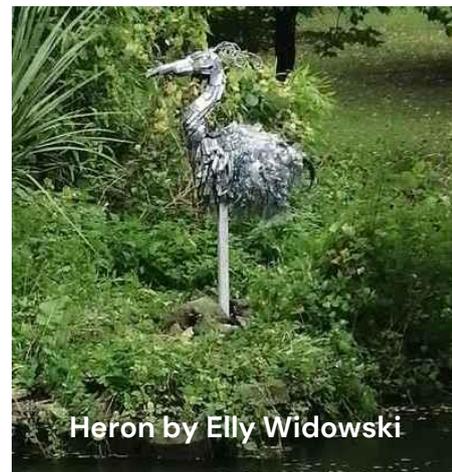
- 12 sanitisers
- 11 plastic visors
- 10 pm curfew
- 9 months in lockdown
- 8 swabs and test kits
- 7 bright red facemasks
- 6 people only
- 5 loo rolls
- 4 isolations
- 3 tier system
- 2 metre distance

And a useless Track and Trace System too!

Seen in Shepton

Shepton Bird Trail

As a result of the cancellation of the usual floral hanging baskets in the town centre due to the pandemic, Shepton Mallet Town Council decided to commission a different kind of display instead. The council approached the team of artists behind the well-known Art Bank and asked them to design a public art trail for the high-street. The artists focused on birds that locals are likely to encounter in their everyday lives here in Somerset: a seagull, a heron, a blackbird, a curlew, a buzzard, a kingfisher and a barn owl. The art trail is on show from October until December 2020 and is free of charge for all to enjoy. The trail starts at the bottom end of Town Street and carries up towards the market place and high-street. For a location map and more



Heron by Elly Widowski



Fiona Campbell's blackbird

details of all the exhibits, see [the town council's website](#).

Group News

Photography

Photography group continues to meet via video conference calls and share photographs taken by members. Following the lifting of some restrictions on our activities in July, members have been able to get out and about and take photographs to share with others in the group. Examples of some of the photographs taken by the group are below.



Fiona Humphreys



Ian Donnelly



John Law



Barbara Voules



Robin Slater



Denise Bailey



Betty Craig

Although we are being restricted in our ability to travel around, there are still many opportunities to take photographs. This new period of lockdown has meant that members will be focusing on indoor and garden photography and improving their skills with subjects such as macro, still life and abstract photography. We will be resurrecting the list of things to photograph that we created in the last period of lockdown in the spring. I have listed a few of the topics below with a website link to find out more. Photography topics:

1. Paper abstract photography:
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=2oM41u3JyCc&feature=emb_logo)
2. Multiple exposures in-camera:
Watch this video: <https://www.culturedkiwi.com/double-exposure-photography/>
If your camera doesn't have this feature, you can use a smart phone with one of these free apps:
<https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/photosplit/id437749905> (iPhone)
<https://freeappsforme.com/double-exposure-photo-apps/> (iPhone and Android)
3. Self-portrait:
Watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V757on7xTb0>
And if you're very, very shy, this one: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjiFJC1gHZI>
4. Macro/close up
5. Still life of objects around the house
6. Garden birds
7. Images by candle light: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZKWN_qr-ACk)
8. Smoke photography: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9qPAnKKghIM>)
9. Water drop refraction photography:
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zXrKBqGIOE>)
10. Macro dandelion photography:
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFUe1U2PYsc>)
11. Flat lay photography: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbTRXVm7UCs>)
12. Plasma ball photography
13. Gel ball photography: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xyCHgQWvyY>
14. Photoelasticity: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rtts66THpO>
15. Pin hole camera photography:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKHtZnG-BX8>
16. In the kitchen: <https://vimeo.com/404405646>,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8s_P9tO68v0
17. AV Photography

So even if you are not a member of the photography group and only have a mobile phone with which you can take photographs, there are many opportunities to capture great images in lockdown.

Our next video conference meeting is on 24 October, where members will be sharing photographs that they have taken over the past month with a focus on photographs of the weather. In addition to sharing photographs, I will be providing the group with information about macro photography.

We will continue to meet online and if you would like to join us, you will be made very welcome. Whether you are a complete beginner or an accomplished

photographer, the group will provide an environment for you to improve. If you are interested in joining, please contact me – John Law.

Walking

Our groups had just got back together in October, walking in groups of six when sadly lockdown 2 was introduced.



“We had a lovely walk on 19 October. Starting from the car park in Wellow and taking in Stoney Littleton Long Barrow and walked about four miles. The weather was perfect. Our group of six was Janis and Harry, Chris and Margaret and ourselves. It had a bit of everything including views and mud.” Liz and Malcolm

John has sent a photo of his group’s outing in October; a seven-mile walk to Rowberrow Warren and Hill Fort from Burrington Combe, returning via Blackdown and a stop at the trig point.



“We were blessed with dry and sunny weather and a rather brisk wind which blew the cobwebs away with a vengeance!” John and Pet

Here’s a walk Margaret and Chris led on 2 October



On a blustery but thankfully dry (at least for the duration of the walk) morning Mary, John, Harry (Janis was unable to join on this occasion) Chris and Margaret enjoyed an invigorating high level walk on and around the White Sheet Hill area just south of Maiden Bradley. "Managing to avoid the grouse? pheasant? or whatever shoot that was taking place nearby, we safely reached the trig point (as photo proves) and then followed the scarp edge back to the car park. There were plenty of birds for the bird watchers to identify and enjoy with far-reaching views for most of the walk, which was a circular one of about five miles."

Walk below Lamyatt Hill

On the same day too Sandra led one of our groups of six on a great walk starting from Ditcheat Church and walking eastwards across the fields to Milton Clevedon and up Lamyatt Hill to enjoy wonderful views to Batcombe and beyond. There were a few short, sharp, showers, but the sun and wind dried us off and we enjoyed coffee and a snack en route. Sadly, this was our last walk for a few weeks and was all the more precious.



Guess what? On the same day Wendy, Sylvia Julia and Janet met at Wookey to do a circular walk to Godney and back. The Mendips provided a stunning autumn backdrop to the walk on the Levels. Thanks to Janet, who led this walk.



Wendy, Sylvia and Janet at Fenny Vineyard

u3a National News

Sign up to the [u3a National Newsletter](#) to keep informed on the latest government advice concerning the coronavirus. It is also filled with information, stories and advice from across the u3a movement on how to keep safe and occupied during this difficult time.

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	Beatrice Thayer
conversation	
Munch Club	Maggie Fowle
Music	Catherine Wylie
Appreciation	Sandra Freeborn
Needlecraft	Di Gommo Liz Weeks
Photography	John Law

Recorders	Sandra Morris Julie Newman
Scrabble	
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

Committee Members

Chair	Liz Nash (Interim)
Vice Chair	Jeanette Marsh
Secretary	Maggie Hardy (Interim)
Treasurer	Jane Burman
Groups Coordinator	Sue Dunne
Membership Secretary	Maggie Fowle
Newsletter	Julia Goddard
Outings	Janet Murray
Publicity	<i>Vacant</i>
Speakers	<i>Vacant</i>
Website	Keith Taylor
Co-opted Member	Janet Sherwin

Thank you to all our contributors this month. Please send your items for the newsletter by 20th of the month to Julia Goddard, Editor. Coronavirus restrictions may have changed by the time this newsletter is published.

Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year
to you all