



Shepton Mallet

## Newsletter February 2021

[sheptonmalletu3a.org.uk](http://sheptonmalletu3a.org.uk)



### Chat

**Members' Corner** [List of Open Shops, Quiz, Jokes, Recipe, Photo Puzzle, Castaway, Tell Us Your Story – Jonathan Fowle, Poem](#)

### Group News

**u3a National News**

**Group Leaders and**

**Committee Members**

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### Chat

Whether you love it, hate it, or care nothing about it, Zoom has become one way of keeping in touch during the past months. The committee is now using it to hold meetings, having purchased a licence, which we hope to share its use within SMu3a. With a couple of exceptions, none of us would claim to be computer wizards, but we have now managed two meetings and are learning as we go. Hats off to Jane for her hosting skills and to Maggie Hardy for being able to look at the screen, listen, take notes, speak, and produce concise minutes! (Photo last page.) So, although it is not quite business as usual, we were able to discuss the monthly newsletter and its importance as a connection to us all. We had ideas to widen the content and although the committee and our usual contributors will always support us, it would be lovely to hear to receive items and articles from our other 100 plus members.

We hope you enjoy reading the newsletter each month and look forward to receiving a reminiscence of a past trip, a book or TV programme review or a photo of something you have made, grown, or discovered during lockdown.

Covid vaccines are being given in Shepton at the Mendip offices, and I know that several of you have already received yours. This really is good news for everyone, something to keep hold of as we wait out these last weeks of restrictions and a gradual return to being able to meet again.

During these dark days, I am always on the lookout for signs of Spring and the better times it promises, so here are some snowdrops taken on Tuesday 19 January in Shepton, just before storm Christoph arrived.



Please continue to take care and stay safe.

Best wishes

Liz

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## Members' Corner

Every month we hope to challenge you with a topical quiz set by Maggie Hardy. Answers next month

### St Valentine's Day Quiz

1. How many Saint Valentines are there?
2. Which Emperor assassinated St. Valentine – and why?
3. Which English author is thought to be responsible for choosing 14 February as Valentine's Day?
4. How many other causes is Valentine patron saint of?
5. Where and when did the St. Valentine's Day massacre take place?
6. When and where were the first printed Valentines made?
7. How much was spent world- wide on Valentine cards last year?
8. Whom is February named after?



### Barry and Barbara can be relied upon to lighten our mood

#### The Sandwich

This fella was walking down the street and he saw, on the pavement, a paper bag with something in it. He idly touched it with his toe and was intrigued by what

might be inside it so he picked the bag up and looked inside where he saw a sandwich, and sticking out of the sandwich were two wires and across the wires was a little clock like thing and a small battery.

"My god," he said, "It's a bomb, I'd better tell the police that I've found a bomb." So he rang the police and told them all about the sandwich with the wires and clock and battery and

he said, "It's a bomb so you will have to come down here and fix it as it's a bomb and liable to blow up at any time so please come down and fix it."

The policeman kept calm and said, "Don't panic sir, don't panic. Now first of all—is it tickin?" The man had another look in the bag and said, "No, it's cheese and onion." BOOM BOOM!



### **Here's a useful list of Shepton shops and take-aways open during Lockdown 3 as of 12 January 2021**

#### **Peppers Deli**

Open: Tues - Fri 9.30am - 2pm

Next day contact free collection / delivery available

Call 01749 346640

#### **Dredge & Male**

Open Mon - Fri 9am - 2pm / Sat 9.15am - 2pm

Pre-order & collect also delivery service

Call 01749 342702 to place your order

#### **Denela's Bakery**

Open 8am - 3pm

Delivery service available, minimum order £10 for Shepton Mallet & surrounding villages

Call 07849139968 before 3pm for next day delivery

#### **My Coffee Stop**

Click & collect service

Free delivery available, minimum order £25 or £2 for orders of less

[www.tinyurl.com/NoContactShop](http://www.tinyurl.com/NoContactShop)

#### **Right Price DIY**

Open: Mon - Fri 8am - 5.30pm / Sat 9am - 5pm / Sun 10am - 4pm

The Pet Place

#### **Repxotics**

Open: Tues 9.30am - 4pm / Wed & Thurs & Sat 9.30am - 5pm / Fri 9.30am - 4pm / Sun 10am - 4pm

Pre-order & collect available

Call 01749 937340

#### **Shepton Mallet Kebab House**

Open: Sun - Thurs 3pm - 11.30pm / Fri & Sat 3pm - Midnight

Delivery service starts @ 5pm—11pm everyday

Call 01749 343443

**The Cheeky Bean**

Open: Thurs & Fri 9am – 3pm / Sat 9.30 – 3pm

Takeaway only

**Sweet 11**

Open: Tues – Sat 11am – 5pm

Takeaway only

**Whitstone's Traditional Fish & Chips**

Open: Wed – Sat 11.30am – 2pm & 5pm – 9pm / Sun 5pm – 9pm

Collection & delivery available

Call 01749 344600 / 07385 209873 / 07398 091714

Open: Mon – Thurs & Sun 4.30pm – 9.30pm / Fri & Sat 4.30pm – 10pm / Tues Closed

20% discount for NHS workers & Teachers (ID card required)

Call 01749 342485

**Ciabattino's Pizza**

Open: Tues – Thurs 5pm – 10.30pm / Fri & Sat 5pm – 11.30pm / Sun 5.30pm – 10.30pm

Delivery only

Call 01749 344714

**Phillips Tyres**

Open: Mon – Fri 8.30am – 5.30pm / Sat 8.30am – 2.30pm

Call 01749 342430

**Madhatter's Café**

Open: 7 days a week 8am – 2pm

Takeaway only

Call 07850491836

**PJ Lintern & Son Ltd**

Open: Mon – Fri 8am – 5pm

Call 01749 342303

**Shepton Mallet Friday Market**

Open: Fri 9am – 2pm

Essentials only

**Keeping Fit**



Keeping active during lockdown 3 and the dark, cold days of winter is so hard. During the first lockdown BBC Radio 5 began '10Today' a series of short 10 minute exercises designed for older people to protect against poor health and disease, and improve mental health and maintain

independence. These enjoyable exercises are still available for you to try out and can become part of your daily routine. They can be performed either seated in a chair or standing up. View the video or listen on [BBC Sounds 10 Today website.](#)

### Castaway

Maggie Fowle has sent us her Desert Island Discs, thank you!



Being marooned on a desert island would be my ultimate nightmare – I love being with people and socialising (maybe that's why I love my role as membership secretary!) I spent my childhood in Kent where I attended the local grammar school. An excellent music teacher encouraged and developed a deep love of music in me. At home my father was a lover of classical music whilst my mother was a good pianist.

Here are my choices:

1. The Wind beneath my Wings (Bette Midler) – I love the lyrics
2. Your Song (Elton John) – a favourite since the 70s
3. Fields of Gold (Sting) – our 'special' song
4. The Lark Ascending (Vaughan Williams) – to remind me of England
5. Faure's Requiem – spine tingling!
6. The Lord Bless You and Keep You (John Rutter) – just so beautiful
7. Eternal Father strong to save (there were many mariners in my family)
8. Paradise by Coldplay (would be able to play it at full volume!)

The book I would take is 'The Magic Apple Tree' by Susan Hill which depicts life in a rural village in the 80s, detailing the sights and sounds, gardens, people and festivals that mark the changing seasons.

My luxury would be a four manual organ. Maybe by the time I was rescued I would be competent in the Saint-Saens Organ Symphony!

Perhaps some of the lesser used pipes could be filled with Retsina...

[If you would like to be castaway too send your eight discs, favourite book and luxury item to Julia.](#)



**Do you know where this unusual sculpture can be found?**

### Sic Transit Gloria by Janet Sherwin

I thought my hour had come!  
Plucked from the dark forest  
Into a whirlwind of light,  
Voices, music, clinking, rumbling,  
Then a warm room  
Overflowing with colour and movement,  
A flickering screen, laughter, shouts,  
A dog sniffing.

They put me in a bucket in the corner,  
Draped wires around me, glittering threads,  
Shiny globes, ribbons, bags of gold,  
Crowned me with a silver star  
And a little winged doll.  
There was a click,  
And suddenly I was twinkling and sparkling,  
And I heard the wind in the forest – aaaahhhh!

Twenty nights they worshipped me.  
I was in paradise, so proud, so loved!  
But one morning  
They set a box in front of me  
And started to undress me.  
All my glory went into that box.  
I was left naked, shivering, uncomprehending  
As they threw me out into the rain.  
What had I done?  
And what will happen now?

### The Faith Healer

The faith healer was performing his good works at a meeting in Liverpool, and by the laying on of hands and words of encouragement, was able to help various people with their problems. A young lad had watched all this and shyly asked the faith healer if he could help him with his hearing. The faith healer said he would be only too happy to help and placed his hands gently on the boy's ears and murmured for a few seconds, then he removed his hands and asked the boy if that had helped. "I don't know" replied the boy, "my court case doesn't come up until next Thursday."



## January's RECIPE

Liz has kept Malcolm in the kitchen perfecting this month's quick and easy recipe

### Prawn , basil and harissa pasta

Serves 2

180g pasta  
175g shelled prawns  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
2 cloves garlic  
Tin chopped tomatoes  
2 teaspoons harissa paste (add more if you like it hot).  
Knob of butter  
Handful chopped fresh basil  
Yogurt to serve.



Cook pasta

Heat oil and add garlic. Cook gently 2-3 minutes.

Tip in tomatoes and harissa. Cover and simmer for 15 minutes.

Add prawns and continue to cook for 2-3 minutes .

Stir in butter, pasta and most of basil.

Scatter rest of basil on top and serve with yogurt.

### Tell Us Your Story

This a new item we hope you will enjoy and contribute towards.

This month Jonathan Fowle tells us his story; how he's been spending these last few months.

Why not tell us yours? It doesn't have to be about these coronavirus days, tell us about any part of your life, perhaps you had an interesting career, tell us why you moved to Shepton or have you lived here a long time, what changes have you seen?. Have you had an exciting experience you can share, met the Queen or danced along to Queen.

Email me your story - Julia

## Collecting – are you an anorak or social historian?

by Jonathan Fowle

The lockdown created, at least for some, more leisure time. Whilst spring may have been conducive to sitting outside with a glass of wine whilst tuning in to the daily covid briefing, thoughts turned to finding ways of maintaining sanity as the days flipped over.

In times of sustained low interest rates it is normal to see a trend towards safe

assets. Houses, antiques, wine and fine art generate more than normal investments, such as bank or building society accounts. Stamp collections get a dusting off and rummaging in the attic can reveal some hidden gems.

I think men are natural hoarders – are there any behavioural scientists out there with an explanation? That remnant of wallpaper which adorned a house you moved from 20 years ago; that nice piece of timber which might come in handy as a shelf. I have been told of a recently deceased local gentleman who amassed a collection of more than 60 classic cars and 150 motor bikes, all kept in pristine condition. Is the obsession with their historical importance in the days when Triumph, Jaguar, Rover and Bentley captured our imagination or, perhaps, their

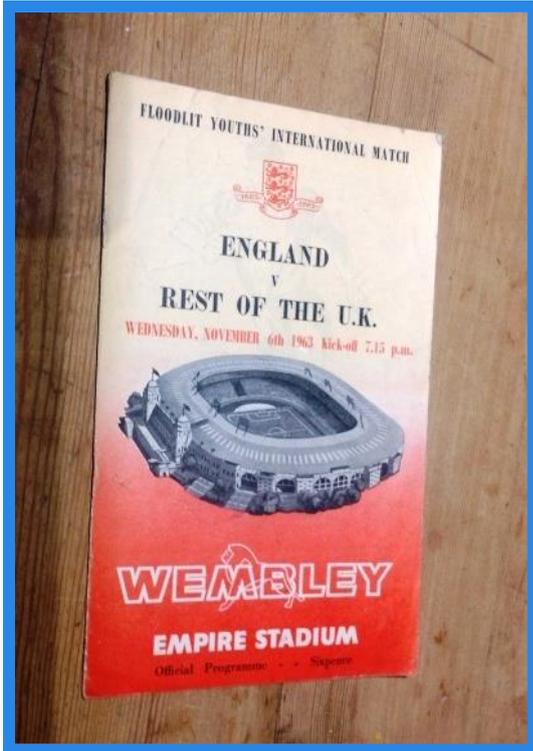
“ finding ways of maintaining sanity ”

relatively simple engineering design? (Try buying a single component for a modern car!).

Classic cars are relatively easy to maintain, cheap to insure and not subject to road fund licence if more than 40 years old. They may not get from nought to sixty inside a minute but many of them will take you in comfort across Europe without problems. Some will appreciate in value; others may cost you a fortune if less than solid underneath. There is a burgeoning market in on line auctions. Perhaps the best known is Mathewsons, a North Yorkshire based family business with an eccentric father boss, with a TV series. As one of his sons says, “There's Derek's way and there's Derek's way.”

Forget about thumbing through stamp albums, think about what you can glean from football programmes. No, not the notes on the current overpaid prima donnas who bestow the Premier League and are feted by all and sundry, rather the post war days of the 40s, 50s and 60s when working class man flocked to see their heroes, Tom Finney, Stanley Matthews, Billy Wright et al. Not for them a Rolex and Bentley Corniche, rather a humble wage and a trip to a home match on





a double-decker bus. The footballs and boots were heavy, crunching tackles without fear or favour. So sad that football icons like Bobby Charlton are now suffering from dementia.

I was taken to my first football league match by my father. I am a little hazy about the date but I was probably about five years old. Since then Gillingham FC has received my unstinting support. Like most long term lower league clubs you need a strong constitution to remain loyal. We have been in all three of the lower football league tiers and regularly flirt with bankruptcy.

That first visit gave me that first real social interaction. A crowd of perhaps 5,000 or so, the programme sellers, Percy Dalton's peanuts from a vendor parading the

perimeter of the ground, the half time cup of Bovril and the roar when we scored. (Perhaps I am imagining that?)

My collection now exceeds 4,000 plus various other sporting memorabilia. ("The boss" thinks I am running out of space in my study, I haven't told her that one or two have amassed more than 50,000). I have issues from more than 90 football clubs, starting from 1948.

Sadly no pre-war as these are generally priceless if in pristine condition. Believe it or not there are even specialist companies who restore, including removing stains from rusty staples.

So what is the attraction apart from the association with soccer?

Viewed from a 70 year

perspective you can see a chronicle of social change documented by photographic team shots, team manager's notes and the changing tenor of adverts. Add in the ever burgeoning inclusion of statistics demanded by hungry fans. It is not only the UK but a smattering of European clubs ties – both home and away – enhance the mix.

England has had a host of football team managers, some much more memorable than others; Glenn Hoddle, seeking advice from a medium, Sam Allardyce with his dodgy dealings and the mercurial Kevin Keegan. The most successful, of course, Sir Alf Ramsey. Yes, I have some treasured memorabilia from that halcyon day in 1966.

**“my collection now  
exceeds 4,000”**

Do you have a study filled with your hobbies or a garage packed with your obsessions? Let us know what they mean to you and how they have helped during these last months.

## It Snowed Last Night...

- 
- 8:00 I made a snowman
- 8:10 A feminist passed by and asked me why I didn't make a snow woman
- 8:15 So, I made a snow woman
- 8:17 My feminist neighbour complained about the snow woman's voluptuous chest saying it objectified snow women everywhere
- 8:20 The gay couple living nearby threw a hissy fit and moaned it should have been two snowmen instead
- 8:22 The transgender man/woman/person asked why I didn't just make one snow person with detachable parts
- 8:25 The vegans at the end of the lane complained about the carrot nose, as veggies are food and not to decorate snow figures with
- 8:28 I was being called a racist because the snow couple is white
- 8:31 The Muslim gent across the road demanded the snow woman wear a burqa
- 8:40 The police arrived saying someone had been offended
- 8:42 The feminist neighbour complained again that the broomstick of the snow woman needed to be removed because it depicted women in a domestic role
- 8:43 The council equality officer arrived and threatened me with eviction
- 8:45 The TV news crew from CTV showed up. I was asked if I know the difference between snowmen and snow women. I replied, "Snowballs" and am now called a sexist
- 9:00 I was on the news as a suspected terrorist, racist, homophobe and sensibility offender, bent on stirring up trouble during difficult weather
- 9:10 I was asked if I have any accomplices. The kids next door who helped me were taken by social services

9:29 Far left protesters offended by everything marched down the street demanding for me to be beheaded.

Moral: There is no moral to this story. It is what we have become.  
Sent in by Janet Sherwin

### Photo puzzle answers to last month's quiz



The otters are on the roof of a house between Croscombe and Dinder, on the main road.

This yellow sign can be found on the right as you leave Shepton heading to Wells on the main road, opposite the Anglo building.



The door in the wall is in Croscombe at the side of one of the mill buildings.

## Online Speaker Meetings via Mirthy

### January Talk

#### William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement

Mark Lewis, the speaker, celebrated 'the life and work of this poet, artist and social reformer who pioneered a movement that reacted against the soulless machine production of the Industrial Revolution. He attempted to promote joyful labour, the enjoyment of fine craftsmanship and simplicity of expression'.

The quote on the right is also one of the pieces of good advice given on a modern decluttering website!

His designs for wallpaper, wall hangings and tiles are still used today. You can see them still for wallpaper and though there is no longer a fashion for wallhangings or decorative tiles his designs are still commonly seen on bedlinen, cushioncovers, scarves or even shopping bags, teatowels or mugs.

If you didn't manage to join us for this talk keep an eye out for the email giving you the registration link for the next talk. This email later in January will also remind you how to register and join the talk or follow instructions in the January newsletter.



### February Talk

#### The Origins of Superstitions by Sandy Leong Black Cats, New Moons and Ladders

**Thursday 11 February at 10.30**

A belief in luck and fate are the key components of superstitions and that they can be controlled by various actions of human beings. Do you throw salt over your shoulder if you spill it? Know that it's good luck if you see two magpies together; wonder if things didn't go as planned because it was Friday 13th, and touch wood for good luck? But where did these beliefs originate?



## March Talk

Thursday 11 March

Mad as a Hatter- Origins and Meanings of Sayings

These are talks that have been suggested by other members. Why not look on the [Mirthy website](#) and see if there are any talks that you would be interested in seeing or that you think other people might find interesting. Any suggestions or if you need further info contact Jane.

## Life before covid

**Solo Group Birthday Meal, 21 January 2020, Happy days!**

We all enjoyed the birthday celebrations for our two Birthday Boys. Bill and Barry almost share a birthday, but Bill's is the 20 January and Barry's is 22 January, so we chose the 21 at La Tavolo D'oro Italian restaurant in Shepton. There were 16 in the group there to enjoy good food, service and good company. We put together a hamper each, with cheese, biscuits, a can of cider, some fruit, grapes and after eight mints, birthday cards and a 'Birthday Boy' balloon each. They were both pleased with their gifts, and all the cards they received.

Janet Murray



## Group News

### Group Meetings via ZoomPro by Jane Burman

## ZOOM MEETING

audio only



with video



Even though some of us have now been vaccinated against covid, I suspect it will be some months yet before we are willing and able to start meeting face to face in our groups again.

For that reason the committee decided to buy a 'ZoomPro' package which enables online face-to-face meetings and as much chat time as needed, with Liz, our chair focusing the discussion. It was possible to discuss some of the admin issues going on behind the scenes

and planning for the way ahead when the current restrictions have ended.

The Shepton ZoomPro package we have purchased is now available to all groups to take advantage of meeting up via your computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone (the latter is possible but the screen area is small). It is easy to set up a meeting and share ideas and pictures, though possibly worth a little practice before actually hosting a meeting! If you want to host you would need to download the application and then log in to this with the Shepton account details. You do not need to have downloaded the app if you just want to participate in a meeting. The host sends out an invitation by email to join the meeting at a certain date and time. On this invitation is a link to click which takes you straight to the meeting. It is really good for small group discussion or conversation. We could have a coffee morning online? French conversation? Book group? Discussion group? and with a 'screen share' you can show pictures/objects to the others. Collectables? Flower Club?

It may be some time before we can get back to meeting together in the same room but this is a way of 'getting together' and respecting all the covid guidelines at the same time.

We apologise to those who are not online and are unable to use Zoom. If you are a group leader or a group member and would like to chat about this/ more info / help setting up a meeting etc. please contact Jane Burman.

## Walking

In December Pet and John led a walk from Nunney just over six miles along quiet country lanes, footpaths and 'streams'. We stopped for coffee and mince pies and finished with mulled wine just before the heavens opened again.



## Then and now

In July 2017, Liz and Malcolm led a group from Castle Cary to Pitcombe and Hadspen. A record number of 23 walkers enjoyed a glorious day pausing for a break in a typical Somerset orchard. In January 2021, in lockdown Wendy and Julia revisited the walk pausing in the orchard where they reflected on those happy, pre-virus times.



## 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

<b>Art</b>	Gill Davies
<b>Books</b>	Sue Dunne
<b>Bowls</b>	Frank Booth
<b>Bridge</b>	Graham McCartney
<b>Bus Pass</b>	
<b>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>	Contact
<b>conversation</b>	Sue Dunne
<b>Munch Club</b>	Maggie Fowle
<b>Music</b>	Catherine Wylie
<b>Appreciation</b>	Sandra Freeborn
<b>Needlecraft</b>	Di Gommo Liz Weeks
<b>Photography</b>	John Law
<b>Recorders</b>	Sandra Morris Julie Newman
<b>Scrabble</b>	<i>New leader and venue required</i>
<b>Singing for Pleasure</b>	Val Sherring
<b>Shorter Walks</b>	Jenny Wehrfritz
<b>Short Tennis</b>	Eric Wehrfritz
<b>Solos</b>	Janet Murray
<b>Strollers</b>	Lyn Hook
<b>Table Tennis</b>	Peter Howell
<b>1 and 2</b>	
<b>Walking</b>	Liz Weeks
<b>Woolcraft</b>	Pam Mitchell
<b>Writing for Pleasure</b>	Catherine Wylie

## Committee Members

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



The committee now meets via Zoom- a steep learning curve for us all.  
(believe it or not we are a happy bunch!)

Thank you to all our contributors this month. Please send your items for the newsletter by 20th of the month to Julia Goddard, Editor.