

WELCOME



FROM THE CHAIR

Hello everyone!

Another spring, another soggy day as I write, but I expect we'll have a heatwave next week. This edition of SMu3a News was put together by Tina King, with a lot of help from tech wizard Jim Morrison—a real star in our opinion! It's your contributions that make it brilliant or otherwise so please keep them coming.



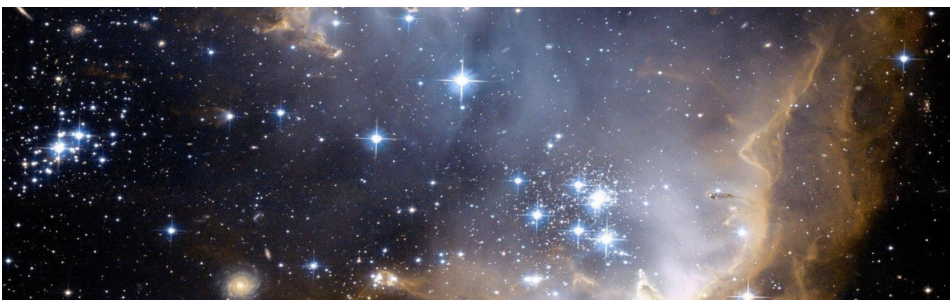
We've had a busy winter, with many lovely walks, skittles parties, interesting speaker meetings, a couple of outings, plus our usual group activities and gallons of coffee. Membership is up over 150 again—wouldn't it be great if we got to 200 this year? By the way, if someone new turns up to your group, please take a minute to introduce yourself and make them feel welcome. It makes such a difference!

Changes are afoot at National u3a. The plan is to have a Council of elected members, to represent the views of the membership to the Trust Board, which will be smaller than at present. A Pilot Council is now running so if there is anything you would like to see on its agenda, please let me know. You can find more information on the National website: www.u3a.org.uk

While you are there, why not have a look at all the learning opportunities it offers—you'll be surprised I think! Don't forget, too, that you can attend one group in another u3a, e.g. Wells or Norton Radstock, free of charge, so have a peep at their websites too. Why not try something different for 2024? I've just joined a recorder group in Castle Cary u3a. Haven't played for 60 years but loving it now!

People, including myself, often wonder why u3a is so called, with the word "university", when we are nothing like Oxford, Cambridge etc. I found the answer in the latest edition of Third Age Matters magazine:

The word *university* is derived from the [Latin](#) phrase *universitas magistrorum et scholarium*, which roughly means "community of teachers and scholars". That's just what we are, a community of members learning from each other! Mystery solved. Maybe we should just call it "Universe of the Third Age"!



Enjoy the spring!
Best wishes,
Janet Sherwin

Shepton Mallet u3a Committee – December 2023

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Chair	Janet Sherwin	sherwinj@outlook.com PHONE 01749 344627
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Outings	Janet Sherwin	
Speakers	Jane Morrison	janec.morrison@sky.com
Committee	Janet Murray	jpmurrayu3a@gmail.com
Committee	Liz Nash	lizeenash@hotmail.com

Why U3A?

Fun friendship and exercise!. Pete & Gill

Gets me out of the house and there are so many interesting people to meet. It keeps my brain active. Val

I've met new people since moving to Shepton and the death of my husband. Anne

It's been a great way to meet new friends and join in with new activities for someone who has recently retired. Michelle

I joined when the U3A in Shepton Mallet opened. John and I were interested in local history. Sylvia

Broadens the mind in senior life, meeting new friends and having a laugh and a chat. Anon

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES TABLE 2024

	1 st Week	2 nd Week	3 rd Week	4 th Week
Monday	Walking -Various locations 10am – 1pm approx. Liz Weeks	Art - Doultling Village Hall. 2 till 4pm Graham Cooper	Walking -Various locations 10am – 1pm approx. Liz Weeks Woolcraft – Leaders Home 2pm Pam Mitchell	Art - Doultling Village Hall. 2 till 4pm Graham Cooper
Tuesday	Bridge Doultling village hall 2 – 4.30pm Ian Jarman Linda Dytham Table Tennis Paul Street Rooms 2pm Book Group 10.30am The Shrubbery Janis Thomson Photography Binegar Memorial Hall or Zoom. 2pm John Law	Bridge Doultling village hall 2 – 4.30pm Ian Jarman Linda Dytham Table Tennis Paul Street Rooms 2pm Needlecraft - 2pm Liz Weeks' home Collectables The Shrubbery 10.30 Liz Nash	Bridge Doultling village hall 2 – 4.30pm Ian Jarman Linda Dytham Table Tennis Paul Street Rooms 2pm Mike Burr and Peter Howell	Bridge Doultling village hall 2 – 4.30pm Ian Jarman Linda Dytham Table Tennis Paul Street Rooms 2pm Mike Burr and Peter Howell Needlecraft - 2pm Liz Weeks' home
Wednesday	Short Tennis Wells Leisure Centre 3.30 – 4.30 Eric Wehrfritz	Short Tennis Wells Leisure Centre 3.30 – 4.30 Eric Wehrfritz Play-reading 10-12 am Janet Sherwin's home	Short Tennis Wells Leisure Centre 3.30 – 4.30 Eric Wehrfritz	Short Tennis Wells Leisure Centre 3.30 – 4.30 Eric Wehrfritz
Thursday	Coffee/Speaker Meeting - Salvation Army Hall 10 till 12 Jane Morrison French 2pm Jane Burman's home	Coffee at Dobbies 10.30 am Janet Murray	Coffee at Dobbies 10.30 am Shorter Walks – Various Jenny Wehrfritz Strollers – Various Josh Hartley French 2pm Jane Burman's home	Coffee at Dobbies 10.30 am
Friday	Table Tennis 2pm Paul St Rooms Mike Burr and Peter Howell	Table Tennis 2pm Paul St Rooms Mike Burr and Peter Howell	Table Tennis as before 2pm Munch Club - Various Maggie Hardy	Table Tennis as before 2pm Singing for Pleasure 10.30-12.00 Salvation Army Hall Val Sherring
All groups and activities are organised by our members. We also run outings, skittles lunches and celebratory events. Please see our website for details. www.sheptonmalletu3a.org.uk				WE ALSO HAVE A THRIVING SOLOS GROUP! Janet Murray

MAGGIE'S QUIZ

1. Saint Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland and what other country?
2. Which is the smallest county in England?
3. And, which is the smallest state in the USA?
4. Which French vegetable dish is also an animated film?
5. Which Playwright and Screen Writer was married to Maureen Lipman?
6. Which art movement covered the 15th and 16th centuries.

(Answers on back page)

MEETING PLACE

This is the first of a series of interviews with members of Shepton Mallet's u3a. Meet Val Sherring.

Val, how long have you been a member of Shepton's u3a?

I joined in 2013. I wanted to be part of a singing group and meet new people in the area.

Do you belong to other groups too?

Yes, I now run the singing group, having taken over from Alison Howells, moving it in a different direction. I also belong to the Art Group, Woolcraft, Collectables; I play table tennis and socialise with the Solo Group since I lost Chris in 2018.

What's your background?

I grew up on a farm near Taunton and married Chris, a police officer, in 1972. My two children, Brendon and Nicola, are also Somerset born and we have lived in Burnham on Sea, Bridgewater, Frome and Stoke St Michael before settling in Shepton Mallet. I've always enjoyed music. I joined the Centre Light Opera Group in 1978 and sang with the Whitstone Ladies Choir and Opus 3.

Tell me what you think about Shepton.

I love it! My dog Archie and I enjoy Collett Park, meeting up with friends in all the varied and dog friendly coffee shops, and appreciating all the many activities and organisations.

I find it a happy place to live.



CHRISTMAS FUN



Andy, Sue and Sandra with their trendy tags

Our December social gathering was a crafty quiz, ably organised by Jane & Jim Morrison. The quiz was not TOO hard so enjoyed by all, then we made natty Christmas gift tags using small plain luggage labels which we embellished with buttons, sequins etc. They were really attractive!

*Look
what we
made...!*



FESTIVE LUNCH AT THE GOLF CLUB

We enjoyed another excellent lunch at Mendip Golf Club, served once again by smily Steve – though his Christmas jumper was not quite as fetching as last year's! Good cooking, a cosy ambience with lovely views and caring, efficient service. What more can we ask?

Janet Sherwin



February Short Walk - Radstock and Kilmersdon

Eight members of the group set off from Church Street car park in Radstock, (on the best day for weeks weather-wise!) for a moderate walk to the village of Kilmersdon and back.

We started with a nice flat stretch along the former railway line, now a multi-use path, then cut down to a lane taking us to the bottom of Jack and Jill Hill.

Apparently this is where the nursery rhyme originated, and it is spelt out on marker stones as you trudge up. It's quite steep, and at the top is a well, next to the village school.

An undulating lane led us back to the car park, from where we headed off to George's Garden Café for coffee and luscious cake!



*Coffee is served at quirky
George's garden*



*Walkers at Jack and
Jills's well*

Walking Group

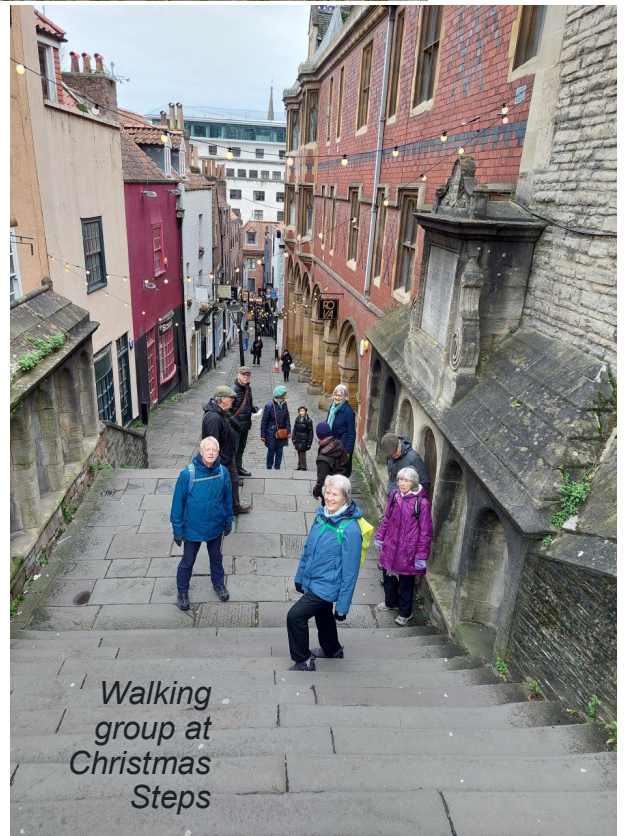
Walking group visit to Bristol on 5th February 2024

For a change and an escape from MUD our first winter walk in February took us to Bristol and armed with our bus passes we parked at Long Ashton P&R & bussed to Gaol Ferry Steps to commence a tour of the City central area taking in sights of historical and current interest. Pictured here are Christmas Steps and the group with John Cabot who boldly departed from the harbour in 1497 and sailed to Newfoundland. We also were able to see the replica of his ship The Matthew moored at the docks by the M Shed.



Walking group with John Cabot

We then explored the old Commercial area where not a single bank is left, took in King Street and a stop for coffee at the Theatre Royal (the only continuously operating Theatre Company in the English speaking world), Queen Square scene of the Bristol riots in 1831 and home of the first US Embassy in England. From there we walked to College Green and the Cathedral before ascending Park Street and a break for lunch. Duly refreshed, in the afternoon we descended to Christmas Steps to the last remaining part of the city wall and progressed to John Wesley's New room the first Methodist Church in the world and on to Castle Park, where remnants of Bristol Castle can be seen and the waterside area full of history prior to obliteration in the Bristol Blitz.



Finally walking back to the City Centre past the Courts we hopped on a bus back to the Park & Ride for our drive home after a 5.5 mile tour.

M-Shed visit 12th January

Fourteen of us set off to Bristol on a frosty morning for a most interesting day in and around the M-Shed museum. The building was one of many used when the docks were an important part of Bristol's working life and is surrounded by reminders from that time, including some enormous cranes and the old railway lines.

A cup of coffee was the priority for most, then we explored the two floors of the museum itself to contemplate the fascinating displays about Bristol People and Bristol Places. It's all very well done and there are guides on hand if you have any questions. Most of us learned quite a lot!



Lunch at the Salt & Malt restaurant nearby was fishily delicious. After that some returned to the M-Shed whilst others wandered along to the SS Great Britain and a couple had a photographic spree round the harbour – a wonderful opportunity to take dramatic and artistic pictures

One of the Corn Street "nails" by P.Nash

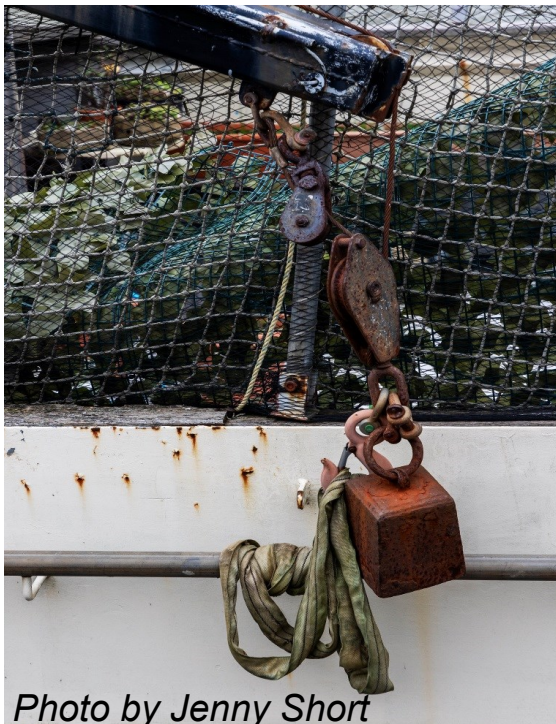
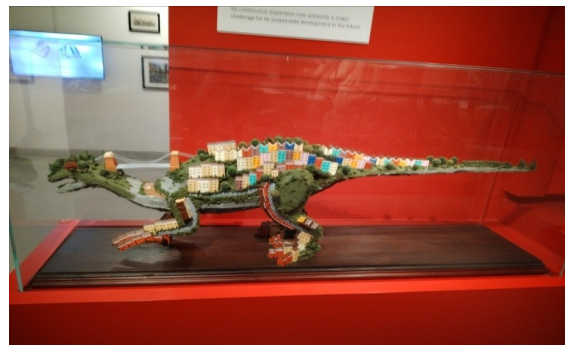


Photo by Jenny Short



The Totterdown dinosaur

Lovely old Lodekka bus



After a final cup of tea we left at 4pm and were back by 5pm. A perfect day!
J. Sherwin

Art Club

"Anybody would think we hadn't met for a month!"



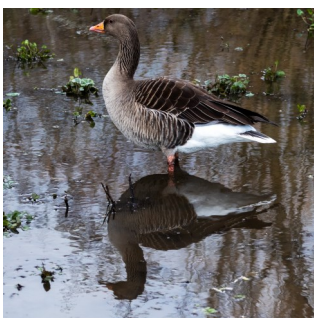
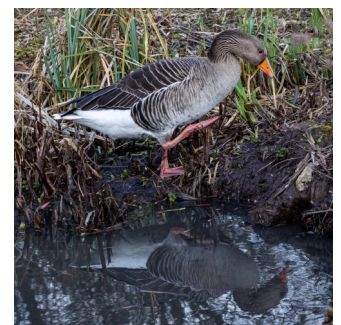
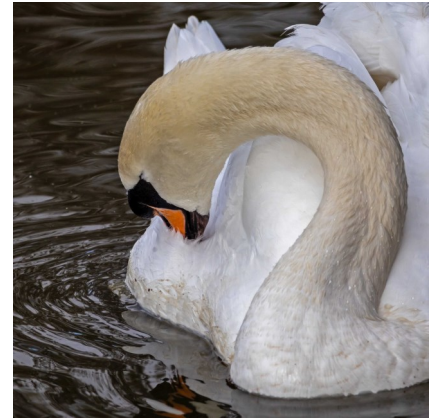
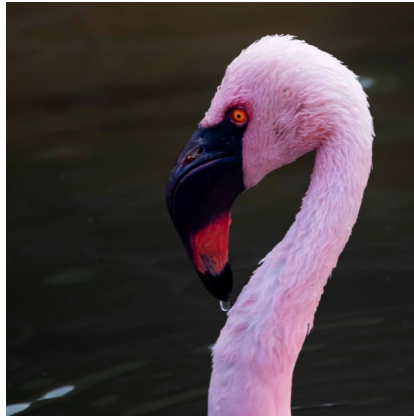
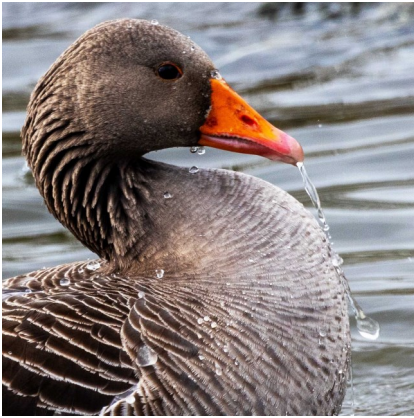
There was a lovely buzz of chatter as the Art Club met for its first meeting of 2024 with a record attendance of 14. This included two new members plus two more who came to see what we do and decided on the spot to join. We are getting quite full and may need to rearrange the tables to make best use of the space. If we keep growing at this rate we also may have to reinstate a waiting-list, or even look for a bigger hall.

But don't let that put off any readers from coming along: we'll welcome you and make sure you have room to do whatever art you enjoy.

Before the tea break we briefly discussed ideas for the coming year: visiting artists, outdoor sessions, life-drawing (with fully-clothed model!), still-life exercise and even exhibiting our work somewhere. All of these are likely to feature sometime this year. Plenty to enjoy - all welcome.

VISIT TO SLIMBRIDGE

A select group of eleven, including one migrant bird from Wells u3a, flew up to Slimbridge Wetland Centre in Martin's minibus on a miraculously dry February Friday. We had time for a quick look around the central area before sitting down to lunch at our reserved table in the Kingfisher Restaurant.



Photos by Jenny Short

It was very busy, being half-term, but our lunches came quickly and were good. We then had several hours to explore the site on the Severn Estuary, visited every year by thousands of water birds. The Centre was founded by Sir Peter Scott, who loved geese, in the 1950's, and has been extended and improved since.

After a cuppa at around 3.30 we set off through the traffic, arriving back at Dobbies just before 6 pm. A lovely day and we didn't even get wet!

J Sherwin

U3a Speaker Meetings.

First Thursday of each month at the Salvation Army Hall, Shepton Mallet.
10 til 12noon.



7th March - Fraud and Scams.

Avon and Somerset Police give advice and simple tips that individuals can follow to help protect themselves from fraudulent activity and break the chain of communication between fraudster and potential victim.



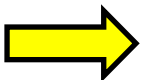
4th April - Local History brought to Life.

April's Meeting is a little different! We shall be meeting in Bowlish, hopefully at The Horseshoe Inn for coffee, and then set off to enjoy a gentle guided walking tour with Ian Keys, exploring the history in and around Bowlish and Darshill. You may join as much or as little as you wish to. We hope to finish with a lunch at The Horseshoe Inn in Bowlish. Watch out for an email with details nearer the time!



2nd May - How not to be afraid of Classical Music!

British Bass-Baritone Timothy Dickinson has been noted for his "wonderfully warm, round, powerful tone" (Early Music Today). His work ranges from recitals across the UK to Operatic roles at Glyndebourne, Scottish Opera, Longborough and elsewhere. He has toured internationally with Silent Opera, in their groundbreaking production of 'Vixen', and has also been a regular guest at the St Endellion Festivals in Cornwall.



6th June - How to identify Somebody! Dr John Robson - Forensic Dentist.

A fascinating explanation of how an unknown person or body is identified and why accuracy is so important and the methods used to find the right answer. Examples will be shown of the largest forensic investigation in history The Asian Tsunami and many more recent examples from Dr Robson's own casework.



4th July - An insight into Somerset Coal Mining History

Bryn Hawkin's story of his family in the Somerset Coal Mines and his own experiences working 17 years for the National Coal Board until the mines closed. His grandfather was involved in the Dunkerton strike of 1908/09 getting shot in the legs on a march. His father and uncles also worked in the mines.

The talk will outline the moves to mechanisation in the 60s and the problems that came about because of geological difficulties.

January Speaker Meeting

Mendip Health Connectors



Nicola Tanner, Manager

About 30 members came to the January meeting and showed great interest in Nicola's presentation. These days, getting to see a GP can be quite a struggle and they are often not well equipped to deal with anything not purely physical.

Health Connectors work one-to-one to inform, empower and connect people with services in the community. The aim is to improve health and well-being, or better manage a long-term health condition.

Loneliness, housing problems and difficulties with social relationships can all have a bad effect on physical and mental health.

You can go along to the Talking Cafe session, currently held in the Art Bank on Wednesday mornings. Or you can arrange a private chat at home, on the phone or at your local surgery, with follow-up sessions if you wish.

Many of the audience were intrigued by the postcard scheme, whereby volunteers are paired with someone in the community who is isolated or has a long-term health problem. The volunteer sends a regular postcard to this person so that they have something nice to look forward to in the post. Replies are not expected. Healthy eating, good sleep and regular exercise are all so important for well-being and health connectors can point people in the right direction. Often we just don't realise what is out there!

FOR MORE INFORMATION: www.healthconnectionsmendip.org

or phone 01373 468368 and choose option 2



February Speaker Meeting



Royal National Lifeboats Institution

This time we were delighted to welcome Glynn Hayes from the Royal National Lifeboats Institution to give us a talk about this wonderful organisation. Formerly a GP, Glynn was a lifeboat crew member for 15 years before retiring to take on his PR role.

The RNLI was started in 1824 by William Hillary. Since then, 144,000 lives have been saved - but 600 crew lost. It is funded entirely by donations, including gifts in wills. A call for help is never refused and usually a lifeboat can be launched within 8 minutes! Crew are trained at Poole Lifeboat College and currently there are 330 boats operating, plus a relief fleet. They are replaced after 10 years.

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Glyn Hayes and Publicity Poster

In Weston-super-Mare, on the very dangerous Bristol Channel, the station on Birnbeck Pier was closed for safety reasons in 1990, so there is a temporary facility at Knightstone by the Marine Lake, where there is also a very nice RNLI shop. This location is far from ideal as there is only enough water to launch during 4 hours out of 12. In fact, Birnbeck Pier is the only suitable location and was purchased by the local Council last year so that a new lifeboat station may be built. This is now being planned, but a lot of money needs to be raised!

Lifeboats were powered by oars until the 1930s. The modern ones are sleek RIBs - rigid inflatable boats which can travel at 30 mph and rescue 20 people. In fact every single day, 45 people's lives are saved. Many don't say thankyou, possibly due to embarrassment at having acted stupidly!

Two tips to end with: if you are in trouble in the water, lie back and float; and leave the wonderful RNLI some money in your will. Maybe one day YOU or a member of your family will need saving!

Digital Café-Shepton Mallet

SparkiT run a "Digital Cafe" in the Shepton Mallet Library every Thursday between 2.00pm and 4.00pm.

It is for anyone who would like free, practical help to use their phone, tablet or laptop. The library desktop computers can also be accessed to demonstrate things if needed.

You may just want to understand the online world better and need advice on issues such as online safety or spam emails, so do just drop-in and ask the volunteers.

All digital questions and queries are welcome!

Get free advice and help from Spark IT Thursday afternoons from 2pm -4pm, find us in The Computer area at Shepton Mallet Library, 2 Market Place, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5AZ.

Telephone: 01458 550977

Email: sparkit@sparksomerset.org.uk

Skittles Lunches at The Horseshoe Inn, Bowlish.

This monthly event is open to all SMu3a members and is by email invitation each month. The next one is in mid March and is so popular that it is already full! (20 places).

We play with enthusiasm rather than skill and most are happy just to knock a few skittles down and score more than zero! That's not to say that more skillful players also enjoy showing how it could be done and a couple of non players cheer us on! The lunch is always good and if you have yet to discover the Horseshoe Inn then it is definitely worth a visit.

Look out for the April invitation email towards the end of March.

Extra news.

The East Somerset Railway are holding a **VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT DAY** on Saturday 23rd March 10 to 12.30.

Volunteer with the East Somerset Railway! Fun, camaraderie and oodles of satisfaction await you when you become part of this highly successful Heritage Steam Railway.

Practical roles in the Engine Shed, Permanent way team, Site Maintenance and Signal Box, as well as Public Facing positions such as Guard, Travelling Ticket Inspector, Shop and Ticket Office staff.

Come along to meet the team and a site tour and free train ride!

For more info and to book a place please contact volunteers@eastsomersetrailway.com.

Keep an Older Person Safer in 2024

Free, safety door stickers for older members

Cold calling is not illegal. However, any trader that ignores a sticker or notice on a door stating that the occupier does not wish to receive cold calls may be committing a criminal offence.

As a nationwide, live-in, home care provider since 1980 we have decided to try and help prevent, where we can, an older or disabled person becoming a victim.

This door sticker may be of interest to you or someone you know. These are free of charge and if you send an email titled "Free, safety door stickers for older members " to this email, info@ablecommunitycare.com, we will be happy to send some for you to pass on, or individuals may contact us directly, (since 2019 we have given out over 180,000).



We do not keep any individual details on a database, and we do not give information to other organisations. We are happy for you to share this offer if you have a Facebook page or local newsletter.

www.ablecommunitycare.com

Based in Norfolk but a Nationwide Live-in Care Provider, established 1980. T-01603 764567

Able Community Care, The Old Parish Rooms, Trowse, Norwich. NR14 8TZ
Angela Gifford, Managing Director

Tel: +44 (0)1603 764567

Able Community Care Ltd. is registered in England and Wales.

Registered number: 07490736.

Registered office: The Old Parish Rooms, Whitlingham Lane, Trowse, Norwich NR14 8TZ.

The Filo Project

My name is Gail Norris and I am the new Area Coordinator for The Filo Project in Mendip.

The Filo Project is a not-for-profit social enterprise based in the South West. We work in partnership with Somerset County Council and are on their commissioning framework to provide day care support for older people throughout the county.

We offer high-quality day care for small groups of older people in the intimate setting of a Filo Host's own home. Our focus of support is for people who are experiencing symptoms associated with early to moderate dementia, whether diagnosed or not, and people who may be socially isolated. We do also have many clients with Parkinson's (with or without dementia), stroke, sensory loss and very often a combination of the above.



We provide meaningful days out between the hours of 10am and 4pm. Lunch and transport are provided which means we can support even the most rurally located. This time frame also creates significant replacement care for a spouse or family member.

Within the supportive environment of the Filo Project, we see clients gain confidence and become revitalised in the process with an improved sense of wellbeing. At a stage of life where many older people find themselves often excluded, The Filo Project provides a time and space where clients can engage in valued and valuable social roles and connectedness. Friends are made, laughter exchanged and experiences shared.

As this is a brand new thing for the Mendip area I am contacting local community groups who I feel may have members who may appreciate knowing about our service.

Further information can be found here: <http://www.thefiloproject.co.uk>

I hope this is of interest

Insurance Reminder

Members of Shepton Mallet u3a are reminded that the Trust arranges Third Party Liability and Product Liability Insurance on behalf of the affiliated u3as. The cost of this is included in the annual subscription fee that SMu3a pays to the Trust. It should be noted that there is no personal accident insurance included in this arrangement. Members of SMu3a join in activities at their own risk and, should they feel they wish to be covered for personal accidents or personal property, it is necessary for them to make their own private arrangements.

Skittles



*A fun time at the Horseshoe Inn,
Bowlish, Shepton Mallet*

With many thanks to all the contributors and particular thanks to Jim Morrison for his extraordinary technical expertise (and patience!).

QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. Russia
2. Rutland
3. Rhode Island
4. Ratatouille
5. Jack Rosenthal
6. The Renaissance