

Newsletter



Our u3a needs you

As our AGM approaches, we start to consider what lies ahead for the Newent & District u3a.

Over the last year we have started to see the membership numbers rise slowly but we continue to be one of the smallest groups, relative to population, in the region. We've significantly increased our offering to 25 groups to help maintain interest for current members and attract new members in. We've adjusted our finances and some of our activities to accommodate rising costs and provide good value for money for all our members.

So, there are some things to celebrate, but to improve things even more and reach our potential as a vibrant and attractive concern, we need a well appointed, functioning committee to help us achieve this. As many of you know, we've been without a Chair for almost a year now, and despite some new faces, we would all benefit to have more members involved to bring some new ideas and experience to the committee. It's sad to say, but without a functioning committee our u3a won't have a future, which would be a catastrophe.

...cont page 2

Welcome

Whether it's bright sunshine or unseasonable wind and rain, I hope you can sit back and enjoy our recent addition of the newsletter.

As usual, this edition will include:

- key dates to put in your diary
- news of recent events
- information about future events
- updates from the u3a committee
- spotlight on groups and members
- additional contributions from members.

In addition to keeping you up to date with any news or changes affecting our u3a, we continue to focus on what you've been up to in your various groups.

Thanks to all who've contributed, your news and suggestions are always welcome. I look forward to hearing from you.

Helen Cole, Editor



Save the date – monthly meetings

11 June
The Laskett
Gardens

9 July
Dogs Trust

13 August
Dymock Poets



Committee Corner

To provide updates on u3a matters and help members get to know their committee.

Our u3a needs you *cont...*

Our u3a relies on its members to participate in helping it to function at all levels, ie supporting events, leading groups and managing its wellbeing via the committee. Contributing to and giving something back through a little time and effort is a key motivator for our current committee members and in addition often find participating is good fun and rewarding.

If you'd like to find out more or see how the committee works, then come along to our next meeting to see if it's something for you – you will be made very welcome.



The committee meet at 2-4pm on the 1st Tuesday of the month at the Newent Community Centre.

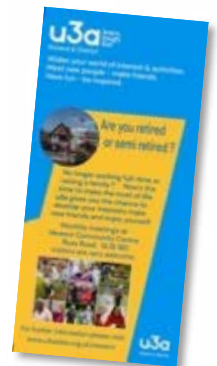


Membership News

Thank you to everyone who has renewed their membership for this year. It's been quite good with only 2 members not renewing due to health issues and 7 still in abeyance. If you are one of the few who haven't renewed yet, you have another 30 days to renew before the system will show you as lapsed and you won't be able to enjoy the benefits of membership!

Since 1st April we have had 8 new members join and in the period 1st January to 30th March, a further 5 new members. If we can continue to attract new members at this rate for the rest of the year then our u3a should remain healthy. This is where we require your help to recruit new members! If any of your relatives, friends, or neighbours are retired, semi-retired or even work part time and are looking for a new interest, then please tell them about our u3a. We have pamphlets available for you to assist in publicising us!

Tony Snowdon





u3a Recruitment Events

Two events coming up:

- We are still planning to set up a table outside Newent Co-op to advertise u3a and talk to the public about what we have to offer. Further details and a date to follow. NOTE : this was postponed in April through lack of volunteers.
- Wednesday 5th June – u3a Open Day. It's our annual opportunity to showcase our events and activities to the wider public.



Newent & District u3a
will be holding an open afternoon at
Newent Community Centre
Ross Road, Newent, GL18 1BD.

learn, laugh, live
u3a
Newent & District

OPEN

5th. June
Wednesday
2 - 4pm.
AFTERNOON

Art & Craft
Board Game
Book Club
Canasta
Computer Improvers
Events
French Beginners
Gardening
Genealogy
Know Your Phone-Tablet
Investment Discussion
Latin Beginners
Lunch Club
Nature Appreciation
Photography
Q.A.C.K.S.
Quiz Group
Scrabble & Rummikub
Spanish
Walking

sharing growing socialising

**You are invited
to come and find out
what Newent u3a
can offer you**

NEWENT & DISTRICT
www.u3asites.org.uk/newent



Finance News

Last year we thought we'd break even and the budget was set accordingly, based on expected costs for speakers, room and hall hire, refreshments, printing, publicity and other miscellaneous costs, taking into account inflation and not anticipating any substantial growth in membership. However, I am pleased to advise that due to 25 new members joining between April 2023 and March 2024, the success of our "Cuppa, Cake and Chat" meetings and prudent management of our expenditure, together with group contributions towards room hire, we managed to increase our reserve by just over £100! I know this doesn't seem a large amount but considering our forecast at the start of the year it is a most welcome a step in the right direction. With membership continuing to grow and continued prudent management of our finances, our u3a will be sustainable.

It's worth mentioning Gift Aid again to you all too. If we can recover 20% on all eligible subscriptions this could generate a small but significant boost to our coffers and ease future budgeting. I would therefore encourage you to sign up for this if you currently pay tax on your pension/earnings so that our u3a can gain some benefit from this.

Tony Snowdon



Groups update



Support your leader

Many Group Leaders have expressed their frustration that, when emailing details of a forthcoming event to the group members, they often receive a poor response to let them know if members will be attending or not. It's a small request but can help enormously, so please can we all ensure that we reply and help our leaders prepare for the event.

Art and Craft Group update

The newly named Art *and* Craft Group aim to cover a range of activities to suit all tastes. Sadly, we don't have our own in-house artist/crafter so we rely on hiring an artist/crafter or u3a members with a particular interest/skill to run sessions and a contribution by participants towards material costs. So, if you think you or you know someone who could run a short creative session to a friendly group willing to 'have a go', please get in touch with Carol Woodley, the Group Leader.



New group ideas

If you have an idea for a new group then get in touch with Jules Everett, Groups Coordinator to explore this further.



The summary below lists our current groups and when they meet. (Not listed is the Events Club as they meet according to the event.) Group Leaders are also listed. If you'd like to try one of these groups, get in touch with the Group Leader or via the Groups Co-ordinator.

Week of month	Morning	Afternoon
Week 1	Mon – National Trust Tues – Walking Tues – Genealogy (family history) Wed – French Beginners	Thur – Board Games Fri – Know your phone and tablet
Week 2	Wed – WRENS Thur – Spanish Improvers	Mon – Scrabble & Rummikub TUES – u3a MONTHLY MEETING Fri – Latin
Week 3	Mon – Table Tennis Wed – French Beginners Thur – Investment Discussions Fri – Art	Mon – Photography Tues – Crochet Wed – Singing for Fun Thur – Lunch Club
Week 4	Mon – Computer Improvers Tues – Walking	Mon – QACKS Tues – Gardening Wed – Quiz Wed – Book Club Thur – Canasta Fri – Latin

Group	Group Leader	Group	Group Leader
Art and Craft	Carol Woodley	Latin beginners	Haf Ricketts
Board games	Jules Everett	Lunch Club	Ann Humphries
Book Club	Pat Ewing	National Trust	Jules Everett
Canasta	Sandy Darrington	WRENS	Ginny Birkett
Computer Improvers	Robin Lister	Photography	Robin Lister
Crochet	Jules Everett	QACKS	Janet Furtado
Events	Jules Everett	Quiz	Janet Furtado
French beginners 1	Martin Cole	Scrabble & Rummikub	Doreen Clive
French beginners 2	Sue Hedley	Singing for fun	Jules Everett
Garden	Judy Eley	Spanish Improvers	Alan Pitts
Genealogy	Gary Smith	Table tennis	Jules Everett
Investment discusssion	Chris Webb	Walking	Chris Walker
Know your phone & tablet	Gary Smith		

For more information about our groups go to the Groups page on our website at:
<https://u3asites.org.uk/newent/groups>



Having fun at Cuppa, Cake & Chat



Our March Cuppa, Cake and Chat meeting offered a variety of activities and a fantastic selection of cakes! Why not come along next time and join in the fun.

Food glorious food!

April's monthly meeting was presented by John Putley from the Gloucestershire Records Office.

It was a lively talk which included an historic summary of how households in the last few centuries stored and cooked food and the equipment used. But the bulk of the talk focused on weird and wonderful recipes from the archives, which included soups, meat and fish dishes, puddings, cakes, biscuits, pickles, cheese and tonics.

Many of the recipes consisted of foods we don't tend to use today, eg mutton, rabbit, tongue, offal and calves' heads!

There were some Gloucestershire classics like lamphrey and Single Gloucester Cheese and some surprises like a curry recipe from the late 1600s. Not sure if the audience went away hungry and inspired or put off both by the ingredients and the time and effort involved!





In the spotlight

Each newsletter we'll be shining a spotlight on one of our committee members. This quarter it's Gary Smith.



I am very new to Newent and the u3a. I was born, lived and worked in West Sussex until I took early retirement in 2021. We moved to Newent at Christmas 2021 in fact, just 3 days before. The main reason was to be nearer to our children and their families.

I have worked in IT all my working life, looking after small business systems up to 75 PC's and several servers together with phone systems.

My main hobbies apart from u3a are badminton, Advanced Driving and walking; I am also building a kit car at the moment, so that saying "how did I find the time to work" is so very true.

I joined the u3a committee in March 2023 and took on the role of Business Secretary in January 2024. I enjoy working with the other committee members and helping keep our u3a running, it is a lot of fun and very rewarding. I now run 2 groups, Genealogy and Know Your Phone and Tablet. I have met some lovely people in these groups and the u3a.

I look forward to continuing making lovely friends and supporting the u3a.

Gary Smith

Group focus

Ready for a brain workout?

The Quiz Group is a friendly group who meet together on the 4th Wednesday of the month to give our minds a bit of a work out.

We aim to be interesting and the questions can vary widely because we try to have different members setting the questions, although this isn't obligatory. We usually break into small teams of two or three so that we can pool our knowledge in answering the questions. It is rare for anyone to be on their own.



There is an element of competition as we do score the rounds but our main aim is to have fun and perhaps learn something new. Not forgetting a reward of a cup of tea and biscuits to keep us going.

We would welcome new members to our group so come and give us a try.

Quiz Group



Hard hats and high-vis

April 2024: A visit to the Gloucestershire Energy from Waste Facility, Javelin Park.

The Wrens group had examined their own household waste, and we wondered what happened to the rubbish we threw into the black general waste bin.

The facility offer tours, but they are popular, so this one was booked over a year ago. Being an active industrial site, we had to complete some extra H&S paperwork, but on the day it was worth it.

We had a short talk about the origins of the site, its contract with GCC and the process. They take our black bin rubbish and turn it into electricity.

Having donned our PPE, we were walked around the site, to be surrounded by weird noises and extensive pipework. In the centre of it all was a hot furnace that burns all our stuff, and the heat produces steam which drives turbines that make electricity. The waste gases are cleaned before coming out of the chimney. The engineers amongst us understood more, but the rest of us were just in awe at the scale of the operation, and now appreciate why it is an essential part of our community.

They did not charge us, so we were happy to donate to their local charity and the tour around the facility was followed by lunch at Dobbie's Garden Centre, next door. An interesting visit.



Our Group in PPE:

Front row - Tracey S, Jenny H, Clare C, Angela E, Diana V, Doreen C

Back row - Paul E, Ginny B, Bob C, Jenny T, Christine W, Angela J, George J, David W, & Tom H.



Overly sensitive

May 2024: A visit to the Hereford & Gloucester Canal at Over, Gloucester

Yes, we were connecting our 'Senses to Nature' again.

On a pleasant sunny morning, we took a slow walk along the ½ mile of towpath next to the restored canal.

We were surrounded by bird song, spring flowers and water life. We paused in silence for a few minutes to open our senses to the sights and sounds around us, to really be a part of the Spring re-awakening.



We scooped up some canal water to see the weird wee creatures that live there.

Then we were ready to enjoy a good pub lunch.

NATURE APPRECIATION ('Wrens')

We meet in the morning of the 2nd Wednesday of the month.

We are not specialists, but just like to share our appreciation of the natural world and concern about environmental issues.

What do we get up to?

- We explore how the natural world works, its beauty, biodiversity, complexity and interactions.
- We examine our capability to exploit and damage the natural world.
- We enjoy local visits to places of Nature or Environmental interest.
- We meet indoors in the winter, when we discuss an agreed topic, sharing our observations and experiences.
- We have some gentle fun together and maybe learn something new.

Please email Ginny, the Group Leader, to find out more, and to be included on the Group email list. You are welcome to attend 2 meetings as a visitor to see whether it is your 'thing'. I look forward to hearing from you. Email: vmbktt@gmail.com



Springing into action

Nature in Art visit – A good sized group spent an enjoyable afternoon browsing a wide range of art including paintings, sculptures and photographs. Sadly, it was raining so our time in the sculpture garden was limited.



“The well maintained gardens were a delight”



Overbury Court visit – We were well looked after by Harry Green. A really lovely garden set in beautifully landscaped parkland.



“Well worth a visit”



Coming up:

- 25 June – Kitchen Garden Plants (herbs), Newent
- 23 July – The Laskett Gardens, Much Birch
- 27 Aug – The Dell House, Malvern Wells
- 24 Sept – The Picton Garden, Old Court Nurseries, Colwall
- 22 Oct – The Javlin Recycling Centre



Discovering your inner artist

We just felt like felting – An enjoyable and colourful session with Glenys resulted in a range of felted masterpieces!



Impressive Impressionism – The Arts and Crafts Group channelled their inner Van Gogh and had a go at recreating his famous picture 'Starry Night'. We used pastel chalk and spent a happy morning getting messy. Chalk makes quite a lot of dust! However, we were more than pleased with all our efforts, which goes to show that we can all be artists and enjoy 'having a go'.





A Gonk is for life....not just for Christmas – Jules steered the group to create a wonderful collection of Gonks. Traditionally, they represent the Nordic Santa Claus, but clearly they're to be enjoyed all year round!

Art & Craft Group



Let's lunch

Our monthly lunch dates continue to be popular, so if you fancy a good sociable lunch, then join the Lunch Club. For more details, contact the Groups' Coordinator via our website contact page.

Dates coming up:

20 June – Travellers Rest, Ross

28 July – A garden party at a member's home



Lunch Club Group



There's room at the table

The recently launched Table Tennis Group are still looking for new members. We have access to three tables at the Newent Community Centre to accommodate those learning the game and those who've played before.

We meet at 10.30am on the third Monday of the month. If you'd like to come along, contact the Groups Coordinator directly or via the u3a website.

Table Tennis Group





u3a Members go Botanical!

On Monday 19th March our Photography Group were treated to one of our slightly more “unusual” indoor meetings held in the Community Centre. This gave us an insight into an interesting subject and technique with a practical opportunity to try it out.

Mervyn Greening (ex-u3a and Photo Group member, recent Group visitor and, until recently, Newent Camera Club Chairman) very kindly offered to give us a tailored version of his much-appreciated Camera Club presentation “My Approach to Botanical Illustration Photography.”

For a number of years Mervyn has been closely involved with the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and, as part of this role, he has given talks on orchids and other wildflowers to a variety of different groups around the County. To do this he wanted some good quality images to illustrate his talks. During our meeting he explained how he went about this, showed us some examples of his work, set up some of his special lighting and backdrop equipment before demonstrating his technique and then giving us all a chance to have a go ourselves.

This very well attended meeting allowed us to have a go at something a bit different. All too soon it was all over and we had to pack up. A sure sign that it caught our imagination and was enjoyed by everyone. Thank you Mervyn!



IOW magic

A holiday to the Isle of Wight

What a wonderful holiday we all had. We stayed in a lovely small family run hotel in Shanklin with spectacular sea views. The hotel and staff were simply wonderful and couldn't do enough for us. Entertaining us with quizzes, music and comedy over dinner.



In a brand new coach, we managed to see so much of the island visiting the Needles and lighthouse, Ventnor Botanical Gardens, Osborne House (Queen Victoria's island retreat) to name a few and saw many beautiful towns and villages. We even had a ride on a steam train and a chair lift.

Events Group



Torquay Turkey & Tinsel



**Staying at The Derwent Hotel, Torquay
Monday 25th – Friday 29th November 2024**

Includes:

- Luxury Coach Travel
- 4 Nights Half Board (en-suite rooms)
- Excursions – Brixham, Plymouth
- Christmas Festivities
- Use of leisure facilities

Prices:

- £334 per person (Double/Twin room)
- £414 per person (Single room)

If you are interested in this mini break, then contact Jules Everett, Groups Coordinator as soon as possible, as places will surely be snapped up quickly.



Avoiding the rain and wet

Short Walk at Cannop Ponds – Ginny leading

Ten of us enjoyed the lovely early spring sunshine, as we walked along old train tracks and over both of the aging dams. The plans to breach them and let both ponds run dry was stopped by local people power, and now they will be repaired, so we can continue to appreciate the wetland wildlife there.

Then we ventured into the Forest of Dean proper and in awe of the shafts of sunshine flowing through the trees, highlighting the green moss floor.

The morning was completed with a hearty lunch at the Hollywell Mine cafe.



Little Gorsely and Linton – Mike leading

A walk from Gorsely Baptist Church along lanes and (not too muddy) fields. Shortly after setting off the group saw a roe deer scurry away and later met a crowd of guinea fowl.



Mike waiting for the others to catch up!



Guard guinea fowl?



Highnam Walk – Chris leading

We got the bus to Highnam. Walked around the estate, then picked up the walk/cycle path to Over Farm. We enjoyed a nice cuppa and natter there. Then, same route In reverse but with a different view going back to Highnam. Good timing, we only had to wait 6 minutes for the bus back to Newent.

A rare walk with no mud, no rain - even the sun came out. It was 4.5 miles. It should have been a short walk but, with a cuppa stop half way, it seemed quite a long one. We all enjoyed the views and seeing the animals at Over Farm.

Walking Group



u3a Members Space

This area is dedicated to additional contributions from you, our members. It could be an interesting fact, a recent u3a experience you'd like to share, a short poem or perhaps a special thank you. So long as it's brief and of course photos are always very welcome too!

Fascinating fact

The stomach may be our body's fattest part, but the fattest organ is our brain. The brain is composed of nearly 60% fat.



What do you call people who sleep in their socks?

Tiny.

Anon



I bought some HP sauce the other day.

It's costing me 6p a month for the next two years!

Tommy Cooper

Did you know...

Your nails grow faster in hot summer. This is probably due to increased blood supply to the finger tips. (It could also be because you're less stressed enjoying the sun so less likely to bite them!).



Photograph of the quarter

I'm sure some of you do some amazing things, have had some amusing moments with friends or family (or pets) or have visited some fascinating places which you've captured on camera or smartphone...so dig one or two of them out and send them in next time – a reminder will go out nearer the time. If we get a good response, there might be room for some 'runners up' too.

The Photograph of the Quarter will be chosen by the previous winner. No prizes, just prestige!



'My Prince has come.'

Jean Loveday

Entries for next quarter to
the Editor by 14th August

And finally...

Remember, if you know of anyone retired or semi retired who might be interested in joining u3a, please share our newsletter – there might be something of interest to them.

Committee members:

- Tony Snowdon (Treasurer & Membership Secretary)
- Anne Jones
- Jules Everett (Groups Coordinator)
- Alan Tugwell (Vice Chair)
- Sandy Darrington
- Gary Smith (Business & Committee Secretary)
- Carol Woodley
- Helen Cole (Newsletter Editor & Website Administrator)



Summer fun

What have you've got planned for this summer? Perhaps a BBQ with friends and family, relaxing by a pool with a good book, a trip away with the grandchildren, exploring the countryside or historic sites. Whatever it is, we hope you'll still have time for u3a...our groups and activities continue throughout the year to provide lots of interest and a great opportunity to see others and make friends. Enjoy (and go steady on the ice creams!).

Have your say

If you have any thoughts or ideas relating to Newent & District u3a that you'd like to share, please contact one of the committee members. We welcome feedback to help make u3a an appealing and enjoyable experience for all.