

AUTUMN 2026

Newsletter

u3a
Newent & District



Expand your horizons

As you know Newent & District u3a is part of a much larger national u3a scene. Each September they hold 'u3a week'. The week is intended to be one of celebration and raising awareness of u3a, perhaps through social events, an open day, involvement in community events and more. Their theme this year is '**expanding horizons**', encouraging us all to try new things.

In support, we will hold our annual 'Open Afternoon' in September too – for details see poster on page 2. The event is designed to showcase Newent & District u3a and we will invite the public in to discover who we are and what we offer for those no longer working full time.

Group Leaders have been asked to arrange for members of their group to set up a table representing the group and to talk to visitors about it.

...cont page 2

Save the date – monthly meetings

8 September
Cuppa, Cake &
Chat

13 October
The Women's
Royal Naval
Service

10 November
Drones



Welcome

I hope you've had a wonderful summer and have enjoyed/survived the hot weather accordingly.

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.

Despite some groups taking a summer break, we still have lots of group news and a great response for the Members Space.

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

Helen Cole, Editor



u3a Week *cont...*

No longer
working full
time?

u3a
Newent & District
visit our
OPEN
AFTERNOON
2 - 4pm
Tuesday 29th September 2026
Newent Memorial Hall,
Bury Bar Lane, Newent GL18 1PT

There's
something
for you

Over 25
Interest
Groups

Social Events
Monthly Meetings
Guest Speakers

FREE

refreshments

www.newent.u3asite.uk

The committee is already planning how best to promote it during the weeks leading up to the event. We also rely on members to encourage friends and neighbours to come along and discover what u3a can offer them.

...cont page 3



u3a Week cont...

u3a week is 19 – 27th September and this year it's all about the joy of doing something new. In addition to online talks and events, u3a are encouraging us all to take the opportunity to try something completely different. Ideas include:



Arts and crafts

- Create a collage from old magazines and newspapers
- Draw or paint your pets and frame it
- Try pottery or clay modelling
- Make greetings cards to send to friends and family
- Upcycle an old piece of furniture



Music

- Learn basic chords on a ukulele
- Go along to a beginners music class
- Join a choir
- Try songwriting – even just a verse
- Attend a live music performance somewhere new



Sports and exercise

- Run or walk a specific distance – 5k, 10k etc
- Learn a dance routine
- Try tai chi or chair yoga
- Learn to cycle a new local route
- Have a go at a balance or strength class



Learning

- Learn how to count to ten in another language
- Research a topic you've always been curious about
- Go to your local library and explore the history of your area
- Pick up basic first aid
- Learn simple video editing



Food and drink

- Try a new cuisine – at home or in a restaurant
- Pick a new recipe from an old recipe book
- Bake something fancy like macarons or profiteroles
- Learn to make bread from scratch
- Grow your own herbs on a windowsill



In the community

- Get involved with local litter picking
- Volunteer at a local garden or community centre
- Help out at a local charity shop
- Join a community clean-up or conservation day
- Offer a skill you already have (reading, admin, gardening) to a local cause

Of course, if you do try something new, let me know. Perhaps we can include an article in our next Newsletter, so don't forget to take a picture or two.

I'll be keeping an eye on the national scene for news or updates about u3a week but remember, there's a whole raft of information, ideas and support on all aspects of u3a on the national website, www.u3a.org.uk – why not take a look!

Helen Cole
Newsletter Editor



Committee Corner

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

Committee news

Vacancies:

- **Committee members** – we have room for more and we welcome new perspectives or ideas in our discussions and decision making or additional help organising and running events. This can help enormously in the smooth running and future of our u3a. So, if you want to find out more about what's involved, 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.

Nice idea but...

Unfortunately, our plans to produce a 2027 Newent & District u3a calendar have had to be abandoned. Due to a low response for photographs, rising costs and the uncertainty regarding sales, the committee agreed that the project isn't viable at this time. A huge thanks to those who submitted photos, your time and effort is much appreciated.



If you have an idea for a project that could involve our u3a community and may help raise our profile, please share it with the committee...you never know...

Finance and Membership News



With just over four months into the current financial year, we have 163 members. Sadly, 11 of our members decided not to renew their membership for various reasons.

I'm pleased to say that we have had 17 new members since the beginning of April. Thank you to those who introduced people to our group. Please keep it going.

Our bank account now sits comfortably at over £5,000, and as a result of this healthy balance, we are now able to offer free admission to our Cuppa, Cake & Chat monthly meetings.

Jules Everett
Treasurer and Membership Secretary



Group News

Since the last newsletter we have experienced several heatwaves and some group sessions unfortunately had to be cancelled. It's always difficult for a group leader to take that decision but sometimes unavoidable.

Those who lead our interest groups do an amazing job, sending out reminders, keeping a register, being encouraging and, for a few, organising regular outings. Several of our group leaders are looking to step down in the next few months and we are grateful to them for a job well done. We will need other members to step up and take on these roles but do remember, it doesn't have to be one person. We already have more than one group where the leadership is shared and the work divided between two or three people. Maybe you could take on leading a group, whether alone or together with someone else.



The u3a is volunteer led and volunteer run – for all / by all – so please consider how you might contribute to our u3a. It can be a one-off or something regular – big or small, but we need you! We will be looking for volunteers to help with the Open Afternoon on 29th September – it could be helping with refreshments, being outside the Coop to encourage people to visit the Hall or representing your group and chatting to anyone interested in trying it out.



We're grateful to Jill and Ian Eyles for organising a 'taster session' in July at Aston Ingham Bowling Club. Ten of our members turned up for an afternoon (in the heat) learning how to bowl, outdoors or inside. We were made very welcome and really enjoyed it.

Do check out the group lists below or the group pages on the website. If you'd like to try one of them, you can get in touch with the Group Leader or let me know if you'd like to join one by emailing via the Groups Coordinator link or have a word with me at one of our monthly meetings.

Ingrid Cumming
Groups Coordinator



Week of month	Morning	Afternoon
Week 1	Mon – National Trust Tues – Walking (short) Tues – Genealogy (family history) Wed – French Beginners Sat – Pickleball	Mon – Mah Jong Thur – Board Games
Week 2	Wed – WRENS	Mon – Scrabble & Rummikub TUES – u3a MONTHLY MEETING Thur – History Fri (2 nd or 3 rd) – Spanish Improvers
Week 3	Mon – Table Tennis Tues – Walking (long) Wed – French Beginners Fri – Art & Craft Sat – Pickleball	Mon – Photography Tues – Crochet Wed – Singing for Fun Thur – Lunch Club
Week 4	Mon – Computer Improvers	Mon – QACKS Tues (or Fri) – Garden Wed – Quiz Wed – Book Club Thur – Canasta

Group	Group Leader	Group	Group Leader
Art & Craft	Tryphena Hale	Lunch Club	Jules Everett
Board games	Jules Everett	Mah Jong	Elizabeth Hewitt
Book Club	Pat Ewing	National Trust	Jules Everett
Canasta	Sandy Darrington	Photography	Robin Lister
Computer Improvers	Robin Lister	Pickleball	Steve Martin
Crochet	Jules Everrett	QACKS	Janet Furtado
Events	Jules Everrett	Quiz	Janet Furtado
French beginners 1	Martin Cole	Scrabble & Rummikub	Liz Miles
French beginners 2	Sue Hedley	Singing for fun	Jane Ryan
Garden	TBC	Spanish Improvers	Alan Pitts
Genealogy	Gary Smith	Table Tennis	Sue Robinson
History	Ingrid Cumming	Walking	Chris Walker
		WRENS	Ginny Birkett

For more information about our groups go to the Groups page on our website at:
<https://newent.u3asite.uk/groups>



Improvements for monthly meetings

The installation of new audio visual equipment in the main hall at the Newent Community Centre, prompted us to try out a new room set up for July's monthly meeting. It is hoped that the audience will now be able to see and hear better by using the drop down screen, overhead projector, microphone and speakers. Unfortunately, the new layout doesn't include tables, which some members like, to put their drinks on. The challenge is that with rising attendance, space for tables is limited and impedes access to the new facilities. The general response to the changes has been very positive.



In addition, the meetings now start at 1.30pm which allows more time to socialise prior to the talk, more time for questions after and removes the rush to pack away and clear the hall for the next user.

Protecting our countryside

Local representative of The Campaign to Protect Rural England, Andrew McRobb explained how the organisation came about and the work they do.

Sadly, setting the scene included the terrible impact that human practices have had on our land and rivers, causing soil degradation, pollution and loss of wildlife habitats. To address these issues, monitoring and data collection is key to enable those with power to make changes.



So, it was inspiring to hear that so many people offer their free time as volunteers (with some funding from DEFRA) to do this, providing a huge bank of 'citizen science' for the Environment Agency and other organisations who don't have the resources to do this themselves.



Andrew finished on a positive note highlighting some good outcomes, but clearly there is a long way to go to achieve the vision of this campaign.

Thanks to those who asked questions after this engaging talk and to the Singing Group who hosted refreshments and treated attendees to an array of sumptuous cakes!



Fake or Fortune?

July's talk, by local amateur antique collector, Chris O'Grady, drew smiles and gasps from the audience as he described some examples of lucky finds and collections both by himself and others that have turned out to be worth a lot more than they were bought for.

Chris explained the importance of provenance and keeping receipts or anything which authenticates the item to help increase its value.

Of course, some things are not always as they seem and Chris gave some significant examples of fake pieces in the past.



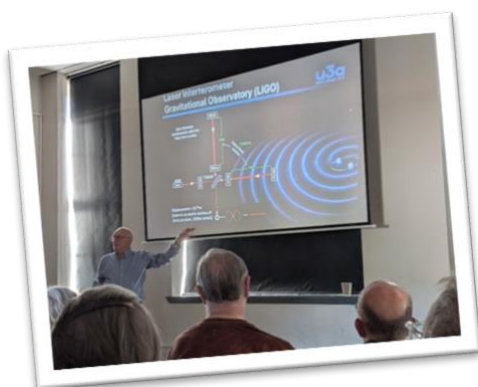
He also brought along some of his own interesting finds and gave advice on where to discover a 'lucky find' and what to look out for.

At the end of the talk, Chris was kind enough to examine some 'treasured pieces' brought in by the audience. Hopefully, Chris has since been in touch with them, to share what he's found out and what they are worth.



Thanks to the Table Tennis Group who did refreshments this time.

We're surrounded by waves



Despite the August hot weather, we had a good sized audience willing to subject their minds to the complex world of general relativity and quantum mechanics. Using diagrams, graphs and short animations, Dr David Barnes took the audience through the journey of prediction and discovery of light waves by scientists throughout the ages as a precursor to the discovery of gravity waves.

David illustrated how, through experiments and improving scientific equipment (including computers), understanding gravity and the significance of wave patterns, interference and distortion has progressed rapidly in recent times. It is hoped that science in the future will reveal a single theory to combine or override the current quantum mechanics and general relativity dilemma of non-coexistence.

Thanks to those who asked questions grappling with the theories and to the WRENS Group who did refreshments.





Group focus

WRENS feeling the heat

June: Oxenhall Canal Walk

We took a gentle walk along the canal towpath at Oxenhall, in bright weather and away from the hustle of urban life. We soon realised just how much wildlife was around us and as we walked down past the lock, a heron took off just ahead of us, so that was a good start.

Then we brushed against a spindle tree that had the remnants of the ermine moth caterpillar protective 'webbing' over it, as they consumed the leaves. The 'strings' hanging down from it, is where the caterpillars wriggle down to the ground to pupate, before emerging in a few weeks as beautiful ermine moths.



The stretch of canal below the lock was lush and tall with reeds, bullrushes, water irises, docks and stinging nettles, interspersed with wild flowers. Those docks and nettles had a wildlife story of their own.



The dock leaves looked 'lacy', full of holes - the larval stage of the dock beetle is responsible. We saw clusters of orange coloured eggs on the underside of fresh dock leaves. After they pupate in the ground, the newly emerged adult beetles are small and shine metallic green, gold, or copper, thus completing its life cycle.



And the nettles?

We love the peacock butterfly, yet their life cycle depends on the humble stinging nettle. We spotted about 20 caterpillars wriggling on one stem, shiny black with distinct white dots and rows of barbed spikes. Soon they will pupate and the newly emerged butterfly with its vivid red wings and striking, peacock-like eyespots (used to startle predators), will delight us!





July: Mallards Pike

It was our third heatwave of the year and although we were now a bit more acclimatised to it, we didn't want to put anyone at risk. So, we gathered in the pondside cafe for ice cream and a catch up of our recent nature sightings, especially the amazing variety, shapes and colours the moths can be.



Then we took a slow walk around the pond, resting under the shade of the mature trees around us. We saw some dragonflies and damselflies, a few butterflies and a lot of geese!

We also saw orange, yellow and blue headed humans to add to our species list! Children were having canoe lessons and spent most of the time in the water – no hardship on such a hot day, I'm sure.

The heat was building so we shortened our time there and finished at the cafe for more ice-cream, before returning back to Newent in air-conditioned cars, as it got to 30C around 1pm. We were pleased to have made the best of it and appreciate the nature around us.

August: Newent Lake

Now in our fifth heatwave of the summer, the forecast was 30C by 1pm. So, we replaced Plan A to visit the Forest of Dean, with Plan B – a gentle stroll around the delightful tree-lined Newent Lake.

We sympathised with the ducks who were also keeping cool and quiet in the shade. Only Mr Swan, who we named Sam, was happy to have a snooze on a sunny duck platform. We were surprised to see a new brood of moorhen chicks paddling furiously after their mum. Then nearby a couple of rather large carp slid along just under the surface. Newent Lake is never boring!

We paused on a bench to share our knowledge of the history of the lake and this area.



At the far end, the pond dipping cans came out to find some underwater life. The time of year, low water level and heat meant we didn't catch much. But it was fun to have a go.

We walked back on the other side of the lake, passing the doves, pigeons and ducks hoping for a snack from the human passers-by.

It was warming up now, so we were happy to rest in a shady spot in the Ark cafe's courtyard for light refreshments. That was enough, as the heat was now building for the afternoon.

Nature Appreciation (WRENS) Group



Did you know?...

We are a small friendly group now meeting at The Malswick Inn, Newent on the second Monday of every month from 2-4 pm. This is an ideal venue for playing both games. We recently welcomed two new members and would be delighted if anyone else would like to join us.



Scrabble

Did you know that an American architect Alfred Mosher Butts the game in 1931? It is now played all over the world in many languages and of course, online, but it is much more fun to play with real people and a dictionary is allowed! Our group has regular players, but welcomes all newcomers. A high game of 1,049 points by Phil Appleby (UK) was recognized by Guinness Book of Records in 1989 but was not in a recognised club or tournament.

Rummikub

Rummikub is a tile game for two to four players. Created by Ephraim Hertzano, it uses 106 tiles numbered 1 to 13 in four colours, plus two jokers. The goal is to be the first person to clear your rack by putting sets of tiles onto the table. It tests your wits as you create combinations and challenge your opponents.

Rummikub is usually the preferred game of our group. We take a light-hearted approach and just play so that the first person to clear their tiles is the winner. We do not add up scores of the remaining tiles, but have a social chat and drink between games.

Scrabble and Rummikub Group



Designing with dots

The June Art and Craft Workshop saw members apply a mandala/dot painting on pebbles and cards with striking results. Stencils were used to help the designs be symmetrical, although some artists went freestyle.

Dot equipment can range from the specially designed tools to ends of crochet hooks and pencils and dots can be extended to look like commas with cocktail sticks.

If you have any craft skill you would like to share with the group it would be most welcome.

The next workshop on 18th September will be wire and beadwork on hanging rings - all are welcome.

Art and Craft Group





Garden news

Despite the hot weather, the Garden Group have ventured out, when able, to visit some great places...



May - Lydney Park Gardens

The woodland garden of rhododendrons and azaleas provided a splash of colour. Where some had lost their flowers, they made a carpet of colour below the trees.



Further on there were lily ponds, a Japanese garden and a Roman temple to explore.

We completed our summer stroll with much appreciated cold drinks and ice-creams.

June – Allensmore Nursery

Sadly, our visit to the nursery with its glass houses and acres of perennials was cancelled due to the extreme heat.



June – Allotments at Ledbury

Despite the hot weather and limited shade, we enjoyed a guided tour by Eileen. We saw different ways of growing fruit, vegetables and flowers and chatted with one of the allotment holders, then off to The Nest for much needed refreshments.

Garden Group





Newent in the spotlight

During the summer months the History Group has focused on local history from very old to more recent times.



In June, Diane Charlesworth led us on a walk around Newent looking in detail at some of the old buildings. As well as knowing her subject extremely well, she had done a lot of preparation so we were armed with information sheets and diagrams of what to look out for. It was a fascinating mixture of architecture, local history and people's stories.

In July, Veronica Teasdale followed this up with a talk on her memories of growing up in Culver Street, Newent and her family's connections to the town. She was assisted by her sister, Colette, and her friend, Rosamund. Afterwards we looked at the many photos they had brought along. It was lovely to hear such a personal take on Newent.

We took a break in August but will be restarting on Thursday 10th September and would love to see you there.

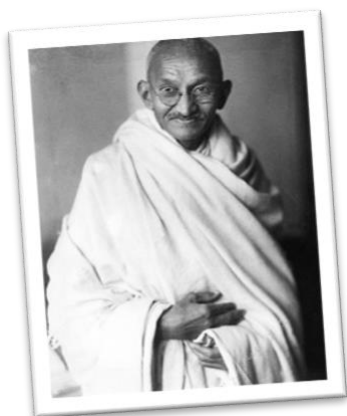


History Group

u3a Members Space

This area is dedicated to additional contributions from you, our members. It could be an interesting fact, a recent u3a experience or hobby 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!

Thoughts to think about



Doreen Clive spotted this interesting list recently online...

The Seven Deadly Sins according to Mahatma Gandhi:

- Wealth without work
- Pleasure without conscience
- Knowledge without character
- Commerce without morality
- Science without humanity
- Worship without sacrifice
- Politics without principle



Two very different poems...



Online friend

May be the whole thing was a dream,
Pinched myself awake this morn,
To check if you are there, virtually,
And felt your sudden absence online!

Be sure you will always exist,
In a special place in my heart,
Your smile in pixels is so sweet,
But, no, you are too good to be true!

Where are you? Do you exist?
Do you still inhabit Internet protocols?
And virtual chats and emoticons
That in joyous moments I watched.

Now that you are gone; are you
Among your charmed admirers?
I wish you well, I will miss you,
May you be ever happy and smiling!

Distances and togetherness,
Opposites, can't networks cross,
I could never bridge the distances
Of your sweet kindness.

Someday, if you feel betrayed,
And, as weepy as a monsoon cloud,
Remember this friend who still cares,
And felt fulfilled by your brief warmth.

by Trevor Cain



Boat venture

I made a little paper boat
It wasn't very strong
It wasn't very wide
And it wasn't very long.

I wrote a little message
I placed it in the boat
It wasn't very heavy
In case it wouldn't float

I launched my little paper boat
With joy and full of glee
I hoped it would have adventures
From the river to the sea.

by Jenny Cozza



**What do you call a magician
who's lost his magic?**

Ian

**When you look really
closely, all mirrors look like
eyeballs!**

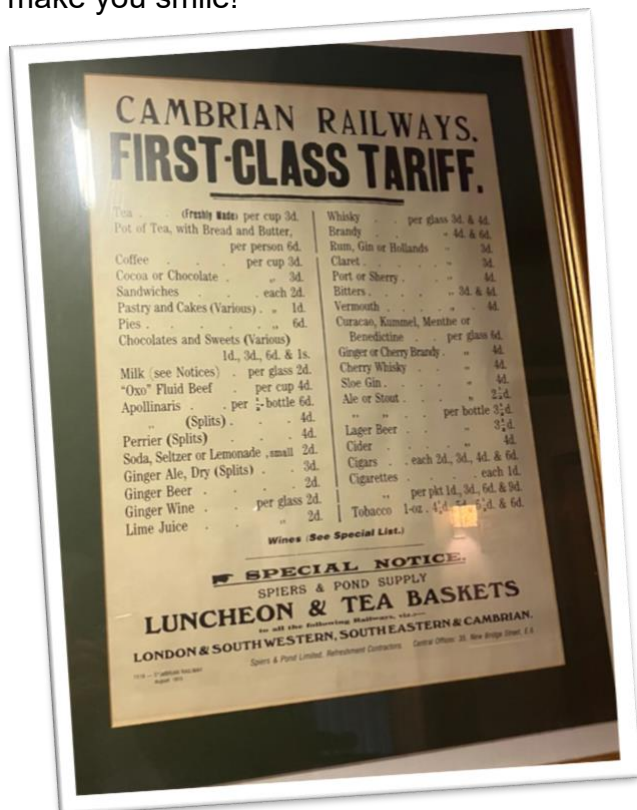


Signs to make you smile

On a recent walk near Botloes Green, Jan van de Lely, in the walking group, spotted a couple of unusual signs.



Jan clearly has an eye for spotting interesting signs....here are two more she spotted to make you smile!



We even had a 'sign' joke sent in...



I was walking past a farm, and a sign read: Duck, eggs
I thought: That's an unnecessary comma – then it hit me!

sent in by Helen Boughen



Photograph of the Quarter

We've had another amazing range of photo entries this time judged by Ingrid, last quarter's winner. (Just to note that the judge doesn't know who has taken the photographs.)

Thanks to all who entered – please keep them coming. Don't forget you can enter as many times as you like with one or two photos. Your photo doesn't have to be technically brilliant but may capture an everyday or special event, poignant or amusing mood and it must be taken by a u3a member.

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



Summer flowers

Wendy Counsell

I liked the contrast of the flowers with the rather mundane building. The angle worked really well with one flower highlighted against the blue and white sky.

Runners up



The eclipse - *Ginny Birkett*

Cleverly done and taken at the greatest impact.



Ducks on roof

Judy Eley

Great observation that made me smile.

Entries for next quarter to the Editor by 14th November

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:

- Steve Martin (Chair)
- Gary Smith (Business & Committee Secretary)
- Jules Everett (Treasurer & Membership Secretary)
- Ingrid Cumming (Groups Coordinator)
- Helen Cole (Newsletter Editor & Website Administrator)
- Sue Robinson
- Jane Ryan
- Elizabeth Hewitt



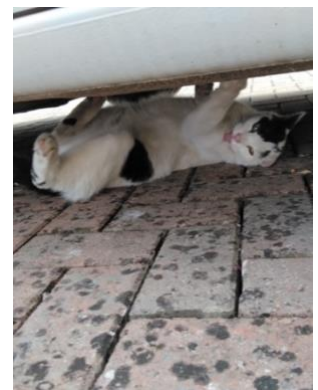
There's more to see



We had so many entries for Photograph of the Quarter, I thought I'd include a couple that caught my eye.

Rosemary Webber sent us this very atmospheric photo of Newent Lake Woods.

Sandy Darrington sent us an unusual shot of what appears to be a cat clinging on to the underside of a car – I hope it was stationary!



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.

u3asites.org.uk/newent

u3a learn,
laugh,
live