



ACTIVITY GROUPS

A Little bit of Welsh

Convenors: Ann Holloway 07443 224894,
Linda Calvin Thomas 07784 634567,
Alt Wed 10.00-11.00, Caldicot Library

Art

Convenor: Rob Harry 01291 421282
Wed 1.30-4pm Portskewett Rec Hall

Bridge

Face to Face every Thursdays 2-4pm
Caldicot Library

Coffee Morning

1st Saturday every month 10-12
Caldicot Methodist Church

Computing

Convenor: John Mills 01291 420045
Fri 9.30-12.30 Bethany Baptist Church

Gardening

Convenor: Pauline Marx 07544 671870
2nd Thursday each month 2-4pm
Caldicot Methodist Church

Handicraft

Convenor: Jill Greenhaigh
01633 548968 1st & 3rd Wed 10-12pm
Caldicot Methodist Hall.

History

Convenor: Dave Edwards 01291 422303
3rd Wed in month, 2 - 4pm.
Caldicot Methodist Hall

Music Appreciation

Convenor: Jan Potter 01291 794034,
4th Wed of month 2-4pm.
Home of Jan Potter

Rock Roll Stroll

Convenor: Lynne Howells 01291 423395
Alternate Thurs 8pm . St Marys Church Hall

Science & Natural History

1st Monday in the Month.
10-12 Caldicot Methodist Hall

Scrabble

Convenor: Lyn Mitchell 01291 421567.
2nd & 4th Fri each month 2-4pm
Bethany Baptist Church Hall

Short Mat Bowls

Convenor: Helen Wormald 01291 423765
Wed 2 - 4 & Fri 6 - 8, Scout Hall.

Spanish

Convenor: Julian Wood 01291 421095.
Mon 10.45-12. Various venues.

Table Tennis

Convenor: Les Mitchell 07367 064322
Mon 2-4 Scout Hall. Sandy Lane

Ukulele

Convenor: Chris Spiller 01291 424694
Tue 2-4, Portskewett Recreation Hall

Walking Groups

Every Tuesday am
Various Locations & Starting Points

Stragglers, 3-4 mls

Convenor: Brian Hopkins 01291 422387

Amblers, 4-5 mls

Convenors Jenny & Stan Griffiths
01633 880578

Strollers, 4.5-6 mls

Convenor: Bill Bewg 01633 880165.

Striders 5-7 mls

Convenor: Richard Harding 01291 420305

IMPORTANT NOTICE: This years' A.G.M. will be held on Thursday, 21st March, at 10.00a.m. at Caldicot Methodist Church. There will be entertainment to enjoy as soon as business is done. The forms are available via your Groups, Email and on the day of the A.G.M. You can vote by completing the Ballot Form and sending/delivering to the addresses shown, or via Email or at the A.G.M.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Firstly, I would like to congratulate all of us on what has been a very successful year for Caldicot and District u3a. The hard work put in by all of the Committee and every one of the Members who supported the various events, has made this success possible. We held a very successful Kings Coronation Celebration in June, an Open Day in September, a Christmas Party in December, a Picnic in the Castle in Summer, Coffee Mornings, Trips and various interesting Speakers. All of our Groups have been very active and are growing slowly, but we always need new Members. Keep in mind that the only stipulation is "that you are no longer in full time employment". There is no limit on age, so spread the word to your neighbors, friends and family.

Going forward, your Committee is putting in place a new system, specifically produced for u3a's around the U.K., which will enable Membership and Finance to be together in one place, making it easier for the Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Convenors and Treasurers to carry out their roles.

As we have seen over the past few months, particularly with the Art Group and the Science and Natural History Group, that running the Group with several people sharing the load can be as successful as having one Convenor. Please keep this in mind if you wish to start a new Group or keep one running. Unfortunately a couple of Groups had to finish as no-one came forward to take them over, namely, Drama and Special Events. We thank Pam Caines and Diana Payne for their long and valuable service to Caldicot and District u3a.

Linda

At the start of a busy month with our AGM on 21st March (do not forget to fill in your Ballot form) and year end reports etc, we look forward to another successful year.

In April, 29 years ago at the first meeting there were 18 members, we have nearly 400 members attending many different meetings of Interest groups. In my role as Interest Group Co-Ordinator, I have had the pleasure of meeting Convenors and Treasurers at our successful monthly meetings, where we share information, knowledge and views. I have also made visits, not as many as I would have liked due to personal circumstances, where I had the pleasure of meeting and talking to group members as well as the Convenors. I wish to thank Convenors and Treasurers for their dedication and hard work and support and advise that these positions can be shared.

I wish to thank Linda & Rob for their support and the Committee for taking over my visits in the coming months. **Glenice Dallow**, Interest Group Co-Ordinator

TREASURER'S REPORT

Analysis of the 2023/2024 accounts has been relatively easy because our financial situation has remained stable.

Our Income source remains the same year on year because we are solely dependant upon members Annual Subscriptions of £10 for a Full Member and £5 for an Associate Member. That calculates to an average income of nearly £4000 per annum. Aligned with that income source we have made substantial savings on the number of members who register for the Third Age Matters Magazine. Also, our monthly Coffee Mornings have proved to be not only socially, but also financially successful.

Furthermore we have managed to maintain reserves of £3000 that will ensure that we are able to function as a u3a in 2025/2026.

Unfortunately we have not progressed with our application for more income via Gift Aid because there is currently an ongoing issue between the Third Age Trust and Charity Commission on what we and other u3a's can claim. Expenditure has similarly followed the patterns of last year and we have spent your money on the following:

Our annual payment to the Third Age Trust of £1300.

Quarterly costs for the printing and publication of our Newsletter and other information for our members.

Costs for Hall hire to hold meetings and events and the cost of food and entertainment on those days.

The yearly accounts will be made available for the A.G.M. On 21st March, 2024.

Congratulations should go to Convenors and Group Treasurers. Here, although not officially part of my remit, there is also good news regarding the financial situation of our Interest Groups. All of whom appear to have good membership numbers and healthy income sources despite an increase in Hall hire charges. My personal thanks also go to a very hardworking committee and especially to John Mills and Paul Bennett for their help with the more difficult aspects of the Treasurer's role in 2023/2024.

Finally as a committee we are aware that we need to spend our members money wisely and our objectives for the future are focussed toward ensuring that we provide a variety of social and educational opportunities for everyone in 2024/2025.

Rob Harry

"Hi, your little Tea Elves here letting you know that Coffee Mornings have started again in the Methodist Church Hall, on 1st Saturday of the month. Please come and support, all are welcome. Thank you for all of your support last year.

Lyn, Cindy and the Little Elves Helper, Irene.

SHORT MAT BOWLS

NINE DOWN FIVE TO GO.

After nearly 5 months we are nearing the end of the Monmouthshire Short Mat Bowls Association League (MSMBA) season. We have been quite successful so far and at the end of January we were second on the League Table, with 5 more matches to play we are hoping to continue our present form, & maybe reach the top. Our League team consists of 12 of our group members, 10 of who regularly play at each match.

Our group has 20 regular members who play on a Wednesday afternoon. Unfortunately, due to decreasing numbers on a Friday evening we have decided to just play on a Wednesday afternoon. Fridays will only be used for the Home League matches from next season.

Our next Home match is on Friday 16th February against Dingestow, they are last seasons League Champions, and are the ones to beat, we have beaten them before, and hope to again. Under the guidance, encouragement and the expertise of our Team Captain, Phil Skinner, we are feeling fairly confident.

Our final match is in April. HOWEVER...

On the 9th of March the MSMBA Triples tournament starts and we are hoping to be able to enter teams.

There are 8 Monmouthshire Bowls Clubs who can put up to 3 teams into this competition.

Our next article will have the results of both the League and the Triples championships.

Helen Wormold

WHY DOES BRITISH SUMMER TIME BEGIN SO LATE?

Hi everybody, you may remember putting the clocks back on Sun 29th October 2023, but what you probably did not know was that sunset was 17.43 (quarter to six in the evening) making sunset the following day Sunday and hour earlier at 16.41 (quarter to five in the evening).

Looking at sunset times for this year 2024, the sun sets again at 16.41 on January 28th, which if we put the clocks forward on this date would be exactly the same time as it was before we put the clocks back last year, on Sun 29th October. This would result in an extra hour of light evenings for us all, saving energy.

Currently the clocks went back on the 29th October, 53 days before the shortest day, (21st December 2023). Adding 53 days from the shortest day now would bring us, this year to Thursday 25th February, when sunset is recorded as 17.14. Moving the clocks forward during this week (25th February) would give lighter evenings up to 18.14 (quarter past 6).

So why oh why do we have to wait till 31st March 2024, for British Summer Time to begin, when sunset is 18.31, making it half past seven when the hour is added.

Think of all the daylight and gardening hours lost, not counting the energy wasted, from now until the end of March.

Tim Crabb

GARDENING GROUP MEETINGS:

Thursday, 14th March

Speaker is Ann Brake from the Bristol University Botanic Garden

Thursday, 11th April

Speaker is Jonathan Jenkins. A talk on "The History of the Lent Lily"

FORTHCOMING TRIPS:-

Friday, 10th May

Malvern Spring Show

Thursday, 13th June

Duffryn Gardens

Our Gardening Group has seen a good start to 2024, with meetings being well attended and new Members joining the Group. Our Speaker at the February meeting, Trey Sanders of Orchid Botanics, is an avid endangered plant collector and brought a selection of his National Plant Collection for us to see, along with plants for sale.

We were treated to a very enthusiastic "plantsman" travels to the jungles of Indonesia in his searches for rare plants, not just Orchids. Orchids, certainly nothing like the ones in our supermarkets and garden centres.

Pauline Marx



Pauline

Thanks for letting us know about the decision regarding the ongoing maintenance of the flower and vegetable plots. We are sorry to hear of this decision but understand the situation regarding lack of member interest - it's hard getting support for these projects at the moment.

Throughout the planning phase for the Sustrans works we have emphasised that the trees in question are not to be destroyed or damaged, and will continue to work with them to make sure this remains the case.

DESMOND'S MONOLOGUE

Hi, I'm Desmond, I'm ten and I'm clever. I got a little brother but he's only eight and he's not clever yet. I also got a big sister, she's sixteen, and she's not clever at all.

Everybody says she's pretty, I' spect that's just cos she's growing chests. I don't know why they grow chests, praps it's a girl thing and they think it's good. I'm not going to grow any. I don't like girls, they giggle too much and they pong with all that stuff what they splash on their face and neck.

My sister knows lots of boys what actually pays money to go behind the bike shed and kiss her.--- Ugh. I know it's true cos I heard her telling her friend. She said she charges twenty pence for a kiss and fifty pence for --- a little bit more, --- whatever that is. She was boasting once about a sixth form boy who paid her five pounds to-- - go all the way.

I don't know where they went, but he must'a had a awful lot of kisses for five pounds. I bet his mouth came out in cold sores. I wouldn't pay to kiss a girl, I'd rather buy bubble gum, at least you could poke your tongue into the bubble. I like my Dad, he takes me to the football on Saturdays and sometimes we go flying my radio plane. I don't fly it much, he keeps saying 'here son, let Dad show you' and then he flies it all afternoon. I don't mind, cos he pays me twenty five pence not to tell Mum so she won't tease him. I reckon that's a better way to earn extra pocket money than charging girls to kiss me. My Dad's good, he don't shout and swear like some Dads, --- well, I did hear him swear once, it was one day after school.

When I got home, my sister was having a row with my Mum, cos my sister said she was going to get a baby. My Mum said she'd been very silly cos she was only sixteen and it would cost a lot of money. Babies don't cost very much, I remember when Aunt Margaret had her little baby they said it was only six pounds. So I reckon, if my sister saved up all her twenty pence's she must have about ten pounds by now and that ought to be enough to buy a big one. My Mum said, 'just you wait till your Father gets home.'

When my Dad got home, he went mad. That's when I heard him swear. I sat on the stairs and listened. Then Mum caught me and sent me to my room to do my homework.

I said I was clever, well I am, cos in school that day, Miss Pearson our English teacher said for homework we must think up a sentence with a word in it that we must use twice.

But not 'the' or 'a' or anything easy like that. So I just wrote what my Dad said to my sister. He said --- 'So now you're pregnant, that's Dandy, right bloody Dandy.'

Bob Taylor-Heard

HAVE YOU SPOTTED THE MOUSE

AIR FRYER SALMON

Ingredients:

2 (170g) Salmon Fillets
Salt
Freshly Ground Black Pepper
2 tsp. Extra Virgin Olive Oil
2 tbsp. Whole Grain |Mustard
1 tbsp. packed Brown Sugar
1 Clove Garlic, crushed
½ tsp. Thyme Leaves



Directions :

Season Salmon all over with Salt and Pepper.
In a small bowl, whisk together Oil, Mustard, Sugar, Garlic and Thyme.
Spread on top of Salmon
Arrange Salmon in Air Fryer basket.
Set Air Fryer to 200° and cook for 10 minutes.

UKULELE GROUP

The group has had a busy year end with gigs at The Rogiet Cheerful Club, and the Measure pub. They also joined with the Caldicot Male Voice Choir and the Seranata choir for a “Robin Hood” pantomime theme.

At our care home gigs, words only song sheets are printed for the audience to sing along with us. The new year begins with another gig at the Bethany Nursing Home, Chepstow. Membership remains at 22 with most coming each week to our Tuesday meetings at the Recreation Hall. It is planned to revisit some of the songs performed during the earlier years of the group, which is now over 10 years old

Chris Spiller



SCIENCE & NATURAL HISTORY

Forthcoming Events for
2024

4th March – Dr. Graham
Cope: -
'Antibiotic Resistance'

1st April - BANK HOLIDAY – No Meeting

8th April – Trip to Jenner's Museum
and Berkeley Castle

6th May - BANK HOLIDAY – No Meeting

3rd June - Contact Name – Rachel Turner:
Bee Keeping –
Live Bees
but contained

1st July – Helen and
Phillip Mugridge
'Galapagos –
our voyage aboard
The Beagle'

2nd September – John
Handby
Presentation on AI

7th October – Mike Dunsbee
'Friends of the Lower Wye Valley'

4th November – Dr. Rhian Morgan
Discovery of Richard 111 in a car
park through DNA

2nd December – Richard Edwards
Presentation on the Scottish Islands



ART GROUP

The last Art Group submission for the Newsletter focussed upon the progress that we have made over the Summer and Autumn and especially our involvement with the Handicraft group in exhibiting our members excellent work. The fact that most of our members exhibited was really encouraging and identifies that our group has developed into a supportive learning experience for us all.

The fact that we all look at each other's work and offer tips and encouragement has become the norm is great, but I feel that I need to thank several people who have been instrumental in this. They are some of our most experienced artists, Natalie, Barbara, Bridget, Viv and Liz. Each of them have brought their own particular knowledge and skills to help people in different ways and it is great to see people grow in confidence as a result of their help. Liz especially for her enthusiasm, knowledge of different Art techniques and the experience she offers us from being part of other Art groups in Monmouthshire is invaluable.

What has also been evident in our success is the fact we all muck in to open up, set out the tables, make the tea, wash up and put things away. However one final thankyou on those matters goes to Marie for her support to us all and the delicious biscuit she brings every week.

Interested why not come and Join us on Wednesdays .1.30 to 3.30 at the Rec Hall in Portskewett . You will be made most welcome **Rob Harry**

COMPUTER GROUP

We are working well teaching each other about many different problems, solutions and ideas for our computers.

Note, 'Computer' means any and all of : Desktop PC's, Laptop PC's, Tablets, and smart phones i.e. the type of phones most of use today.

Below is our programme up to mid-March 2024.

We train in small groups , often 1 to 1 , up to large groups depending on the subject.

Come along and join us on Friday mornings in Bethany Baptist and we will help you with your problems, and of course you can help us.

Caldicot Computer Group - 2024 Current Programme		
05 January	What problems did you have on your computer over Christmas/New year?	Voice reading and dictation onto a computer / phone
12 January	Digital Image/Photo subject :	Toys - any age How to make a Photo Montage Dave & Keith
19 January	Basic photography	Digital Voice and Landline switch off : What happens when all are phones are all 'fibre to our houses', what problems will there be ?
26 January	a) Revision on Keyboard shortcuts	b) New Amazing Windows Shortcuts by Leila Gharani c) Files and folders - Revision and Q & A's on problems
02 February	Artificial Intelligence (AI)	What is it , how will it affect us, help us, cause us problems
09 February	Digital Image/Photo subject :	Oldfashioned household item(s) Which? Best Power Banks for Mobile phones or Tablets
16 February	Open University 'Computing Skills'	How to edit photos on a mobile phone - John Muss
23 February	NO Computer Group meeting - Funeral at Bethany Baptist Church	
01 March	"Sticky Notes" - what are they - How to use them Ingrid	Linking Phones / Tablets / Laptop PCs / Desktop PCs, as required . eg Read emails or Contact details on any of the devices you own.
08 March	Digital Image/Photo subject: - Ties	Decide future subjects.
15 March	Backing up files - Revision and Q & A's	Remote control of Heating / Lighting / TV / Security Cameras, using phone or Tablet
22 March	Secure Passwords and managing them	Leonado Software (Artificial Intelligence)
29 March	No meeting - Good Friday	
05 April	Revision on special numbers eg 1) *#06# - what is this number and how is it used for your mobile phone safety and 2) 159 how to use this Bank safety number 3) Other 'special numbers.	
12 April	Digital Image/Photo subject: - Ties	
19 April	Latest information on scams	Using 'Snip & Sketch
26 April	File protection in Word or Excel etc	Review on the programme Jan - Mar 2024, how good were the lessons, what changes and/or improvements would you like ?

William Marshal (talk by John Burrows)

William Marshal is associated with Chepstow, Pembroke and Ireland, though 'Chepstow' was known as 'Striguil' in the 11th century, the time of William Marshal, and appears in the Domesday Book under that name. 'Striguil' lay within the Hundred of Caldicot.

A few facts about Chepstow are relevant to the background of the town. The tides are an important feature of Chepstow's geography, having an average difference between high and low tide of 11 metres (or approximately 36 feet); this made Chepstow a major port in the area during the medieval ages.

Chepstow Castle was probably the town's oldest building, constructed in 1067AD to guard the bridge crossing the River Wye,

William FitzOsbern was the first Earl of Hereford, and the original part of the castle was built by him. Sadly his estates were confiscated when he was implicated in a plot against the king, and the estates awarded to William Marshal.

William Marshal was a trusted adviser to four kings – Henry II, Richard I, John and Henry III. As well as his association with the rulers of England, he married Isabel de Clare, Countess of Striguil, Pembroke, and Clare, Ireland. William thus became lord of these estates by marriage.

Marshal was born in 1146 in Hampshire, southern England, and from age 13 to 19 he trained as a knight in northern France, and from 20 to 42-year old he toured the French tournament circuit. He was very skilled in the use of weapons – the aim of these mock battles was not *kill* an opponent, but to capture them and demand a ransom for return of their menfolk. He was very successful and became extremely wealthy.

Isabel de Clare was a ward of the king and a 'valuable asset', since her inherited wealth made her an attractive marriage prospect. In her teens she was the richest ward of the king, first Henry II, and then Richard I. William Marshal gained her hand in marriage sanctioned by the king. The custom in those days was that a woman's property was transferred to her husband when she married.

Marshal promptly travelled to the Tower of London, and claimed Isabel de Clare as his bride. Their courtship was short, but the marriage was apparently a success, lasting some thirty years.

When William Marshal was no longer the hero of the joust, he became an elder statesman and diplomat, travelling over much of England and Europe. Finally he was made regent for the youthful King Henry III.

Marshal's last venture on the battlefield was the Battle of Lincoln in 1217, when he repulsed a French army led by King Louis XII.

Marshal died in 1219 at Caversham Manor, near Reading, and later buried at the Temple Church in the City of London. Isabel de Clare died a year later, and was buried at Tintern Abbey.

The title 'Earl Marshal' is still in use today, and is conferred on people entrusted with the organisation of state occasions such as coronations, lying in state of monarchs, opening of Parliament, etc.

The first person to organize these functions was William Marshal, and subsequent holders of the office have been appointed for their lifetime. The order of precedence for state and other important occasions is decided by the Earl Marshal. For example at the Westminster Abbey service of the late queen, the President of the United States of America was sat fourteen rows back from the front; some might think that the US President should have a more prestigious seat, but he was given one by the Earl Marshal, based on long established rules.

When William Marshal was made 'Earl Marshal', he was the one who seized the right from the other barons to exercise all these powers himself, to run the Accession Council, to run the coronations, to run the state funerals, especially as most other courtiers did not want the responsibility of the office. Most statues of William Marshal show him holding a copy of the Magna Carta, considered to be his greatest achievement. **Dave Edwards**

HANDICRAFT GROUP

The u3a Handicraft Group meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month in the Methodist Church schoolroom in Caldicot from 10am...12 noon.

On the 9th October 2 members attended a First Aid Course, organised by the u3a committee, both ladies found the course very interesting and informative, hopefully more of these courses will take place in the future.

We held a Christmas Fayre in the Methodist Hall on 4th November in conjunction with the u3a Saturday Coffee morning and the u3a Art Group. This proved very successful and was well attended by the public with Christmas crafts, handmade cards and paintings for sale as Christmas presents. We hope to repeat this in 2024.

Also in November the Ladies were busy making poppies to decorate the area around the Memorial in Caldicot for Remembrance Sunday. We received some very positive comments about this!

We knitted, sewed and chatted until our last meeting of the year on the 20th December when a Secret Santa called in with some surprise presents, coffee, tea and mince pies, not much work done but lots of chat!!

We resumed on 10th January 2024, there are several projects in the pipeline for the next few months, including an Easter Wreath and projects for charity. We are a very laid back group, we do our own projects, help each other where we can and if we don't know we will try to find out.



Jill Greenhalgh