

A U T U M N 2 0 2 3

Newsletter

u3a
Newent & District



We've moved!

After consultation with the members, Newent & District u3a have moved and are settling in to their new home at the Newent Community Centre, Ross Road, GL18 1DB. The former workhouse and grammar school is being tastefully refurbished by the owners, Glebe Chapel, and offers a range of facilities, (including lift access into the building), for local events and community groups.

It's early days, but since moving, our numbers attending the monthly meetings have increased. We hope this trend will continue as we endeavour to grow our membership by raising our profile within the community. If you have any ideas to help achieve this, please contact either a committee member or via the Membership option on our website contact page.

KEEP SPREADING THE WORD!

Save the date – monthly meetings

10 October

The Art of Name Dropping

by guest speaker

Richard Moulder

A lighthearted talk relating to Richard's experience of adult education, drama and the role of MC.

14 November

Cuppa, Cake and Chat!

An opportunity for all members to meet and catch up, and for prospective members to find out a bit more about u3a, the groups available and how to join.

Welcome

Welcome to the new look quarterly u3a newsletter!

As you can see this is the Autumn edition and 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.

Remember, this is **your** newsletter and I welcome any feedback to help improve it. I hope you'll support me as I gather news and information each quarter to make this an interesting read.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Helen Cole, Editor



Committee Corner

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

2023 Annual General Meeting

Various AGM related documents were circulated to all members for their perusal, prior to our AGM on Tuesday 11th July 2023.

These included:

- Minutes from the previous AGM
- Treasury Report and Financial Statement
- Nominations for Committee Form and Proxy Voting Form for role of Chair
- Confirmation of Membership Fees

No comments or objections were raised relating to reports. Unfortunately, no nominations for the position of Chair were offered; however, Martin Cole was nominated and appointed to the Management Committee. In addition, subsequent to the AGM, Carol Woodley and Helen Cole were also co-opted onto the committee. This is great news for membership representation, but we still have vacancies to be filled.

Finance News

I noted with concern that last year's expenditure (year ending March 2023), was considerably greater than our income, thereby reducing our reserve to just over £1500. This has necessitated reducing our spend for this year and generating additional income where we can, by increasing membership numbers, raising the entry fee for our monthly meetings, charging groups a small fee per attendee for room hire, reducing our costs for speakers and by having more lower cost social events throughout the year.

For the year to date, income is £2218.80, expenditure is £1864.86, thereby increasing our reserve slightly to £1841.88, whilst maintaining a cash float of £50.00. If this continues, then the financial health of your u3a will be secured.

Tony Snowdon

Membership News

Unfortunately, the pandemic had a devastating effect on our numbers, plummeting from 200 to 70. This has resulted in a huge reduction in income, which we need to address – see finance news. Fortunately, numbers have since climbed steadily, with some lapsed members re-joining, but mainly due to new members, increasing our membership to 117. But, there's still a long way to go to get to pre-pandemic numbers and that's why we need your help.

Do you have a friend or neighbour who might benefit from our u3a activities? Don't forget, they are very welcome to sample a group activity for free or attend a monthly meeting for a small fee before committing to join.

A very warm welcome to all our new members. We hope you're enjoying being part of the Newent & District u3a and continue to do so for many years to come.

Thanks to all for your continued support.

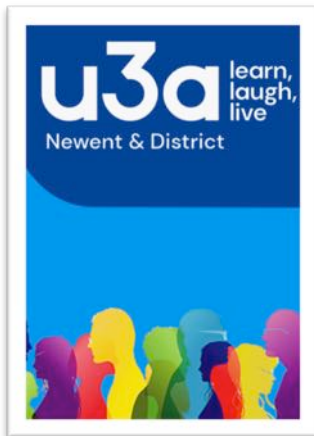
Tony Snowdon

The Elusive Chair

Chair vacancy – we're still looking for a replacement for Alan as Chair for Newent & District u3a. The role really isn't too onerous with lots of support from the committee, but it is an essential role that we need to fill. Perhaps becoming a committee member could be a first step to gain an insight into how our u3a branch functions before volunteering for the role. If you think you might be interested, please contact a member of the committee to discuss further.



New committee members – we would encourage more members to consider becoming a committee member. It's not too time-consuming or difficult but good fun and rewarding, especially knowing that you're helping numerous others enjoy the benefits of our u3a.



Watch this space...

Some new groups starting before year end:

- National Trust
- Chess
- Crochet
- Singing for fun
- Table Tennis
- Maths for fun
- Art

If you would like to join any of these groups, please contact Groups Coordinator, Jules Everett.

Christmas is coming...

One for the diary: we will be holding our Christmas Social on Tuesday 12th December at 2.00pm.

Admission is free. Refreshments, entertainment and free raffle provided.



Survey for the future

To help us assess if our offering is meeting the needs and expectations of our members, we will be sending out a short online survey very soon via email. The survey will only take a few minutes to complete and we hope all members will take the time to provide us with this invaluable feedback.

Open Day success



In May we held an Open Day at our new u3a venue. Each group was represented with some impressive displays and members on hand to promote their group and answer any questions. The event was very well attended, by both existing members and visitors, resulting in new members to u3a and a rise in group numbers. Well done to all involved for making it such a successful event.

Swap Shop

We've introduced a 'swap' table at our monthly meetings for books, games and jigsaw puzzles. If you've nothing to swap then you can make a donation (we suggest £1 – book; £2 – games/puzzles). Money raised will go into the Newent & District u3a fund.



Raising our profile

Thanks to Tony for an article all about Newent & District u3a in September's edition of Newent Focus. Hopefully this will generate some interest from local retirees to come and join us.

We're also attracting prospective new members after seeing our banner outside the Community Centre, which is great news.

In the spotlight

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

My background in engineering and senior project management, specialising in the erection, maintenance, repair and upgrade of power stations, petrochemical and pharmaceutical plants across the world, enables me to offer a wealth of experience and knowledge to the u3a committee and the diverse roles I currently hold.



After retiring and moving to Newent in 2018 to be nearer to our daughter, Carol and I were keen to get involved in some local activities and meet new people. After spotting a u3a poster, we attended our first monthly meeting which we enjoyed and thought it good value for money. Then, after trying some groups, which were so welcoming and friendly, we decided to join. Shortly afterwards I was persuaded to join the committee over a pint. Since then, I've taken on both the Treasurer and Membership Secretary as a combined role, which works well together (maintaining membership records and collecting fees links nicely with the management and monitoring of our u3a finances).

I've joined several groups: Walking, Garden, Photography, Events, Canasta, French and Wrens. Very diverse, I know, but it reflects my personality and breadth of interests! Being an active member of the u3a, and looking after our two dogs and allotment keep me very active both physically and mentally as well as being good fun and rewarding.

Tony Snowdon

Food for thought

The August monthly meeting about estate planning and how to prepare for the future was certainly thought provoking. Ria Hambridge from Silverline Legal, explained the options and pitfalls of will writing, setting up trusts and the importance of Lasting Power of Attorney to protect assets and decision making in the event of passing, elderly care and incapacitation for ourselves and our families.



As an aging group, it's so important for many of us that our expectations and wishes are met, towards and at the end of life. No doubt some members who attended the talk are actively implementing some of the suggestions and advising others to take a moment to consider their own future.



Group focus

Climate change on our doorstep

A great afternoon at Pixley Berries, where we visited the blackcurrant fields on a tractor trailer, sampled the berries and were treated to a huge drink of juice. We discovered that their blackcurrant crop is struggling due to increasingly mild winters caused by climate change.

The growers are trying out different strains and plant foods to maintain a good crop. They're also trying to improve soil quality through less soil disturbance and have planted strips of wild flowers to attract pollinators. Who'd be a blackcurrant farmer!

"Mmm....tasty"

Coming up:

26 Sept – Composting demonstration

24 Oct – Looking after houseplants

28 Nov – Creating a floral Christmas decoration

Garden Group



Are you game?

Our merry band meets on the second Monday of each month and, amid much chatter and laughter, some serious games are played (well, depends on your definition of 'serious'!).

It's a fun, sociable afternoon and we would welcome any new faces.

Scrabble and Rummikub Group

"It's a fun sociable afternoon"

Sun shines on the Wrens

Cannop Ponds, Forest of Dean

A chance to observe the water dependent wildlife that will be lost if the decision is made to remove the old dams, which hold back the pond water, and return it to dry land. It was great to see around six mandarin ducks perched on a tree branch. Shouldn't they be on the water?



A sunny visit to Slimbridge

This time to admire the new generation of water birds finding their feet, as we tried to ID as many duck species as possible, with a little cheating of course. As we had lunch, we were delighted to watch a shelduck family waddle past us.

Hellens Gardens, Much Marcle

We had a sunny day to enjoy observing the flowers being pollinated by hungry bees and hoverflies, in this wildflower meadow, and around the gardens.

The Textile exhibition was being held in the grounds, so we enjoyed a lunch there, before being tempted with handmade produce.



Hampton Court Castle Gardens, Hope under Dinmore

We enjoyed a warm sunny day, to explore the riverside walk, formal gardens, and, for some, the maze. Yes, they got lost! And the Orangery cafe provided plenty of delicious sustenance.



Nature Appreciation Group - Wrens

"I plan to visit local places of natural, environmental and seasonal interest, to share our love and concern for the natural world. In winter, we meet to explore and discuss the topic of the month. Please join my mailing list to get details of the next meeting"

Ginny Birkett, Group Leader

Can we tempt you?

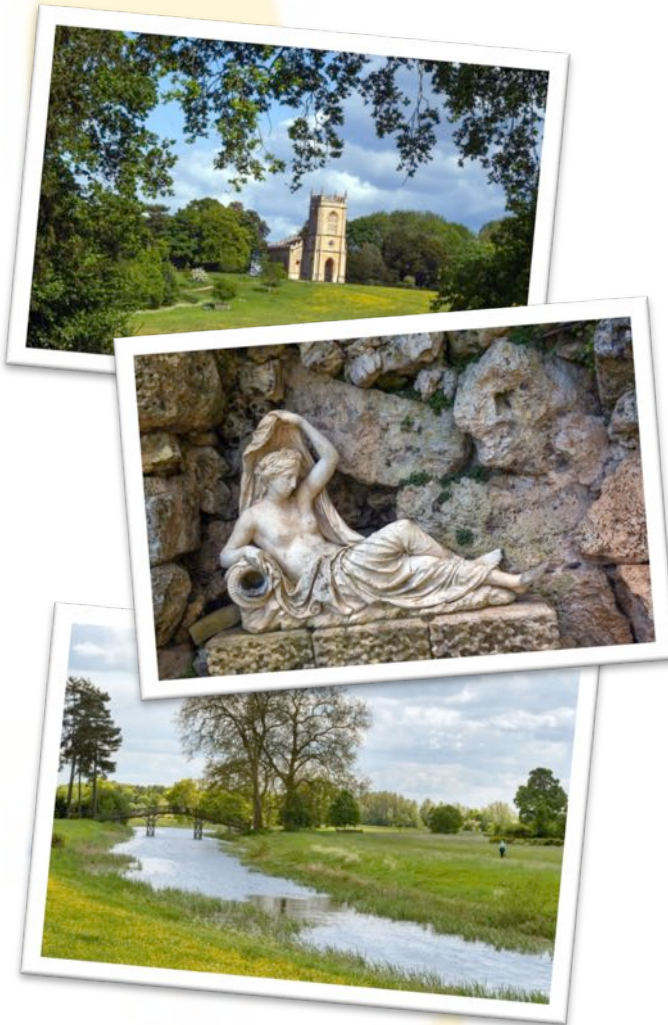
Events Group outings coming up:

3 Oct – And Then There Were None (Everyman Theatre)

6 Nov – Twelve Angry Men (Everyman Theatre)

6-10 Nov – Mini break to Torquay

Events Group



Photographic heaven

Described as one of the most innovative designed landscapes in Britain, Croombe Court, near Upton-Upon-Severn, offered a wealth of photographic opportunities for the group. In fact, we might have to return, as there was so much to see.

Our group meets on the 3rd Monday afternoon of the month venturing out, weather permitting, to a local photogenic venue. When this isn't possible, we meet in a member's home to review each other's photos from previous outings and to improve our photographic knowledge. New members would be really welcome, regardless of your experience, make or model of smartphone or camera. So, please come and join us!

Photography Group

“One of the most innovative designed landscapes in Britain”

Let's lunch

Lunch Club dates coming up:

19 Oct – Travellers Rest, Ross-on-Wye

16 Nov – The Walwyn Arms, Much Marcle

21 Dec – The Alma Inn, Linton

18 Jan – Kings Arms, Newent

Lunch Club Group

Special thanks...

To all our Group Leaders for the efforts they go to, in some cases sharing their homes, to enable others to try new things, make friends and have fun. Your contribution is invaluable and much appreciated. Thank you.



u3a Members Page

This page is dedicated to additional contributions from you, our members. To start the ball rolling, here are some suggestions, which may or may not become regular features - that's up to you.



Fascinating fact

All of your microbes combined weigh about as much as your brain; approximately 3lbs!



I used to live hand to mouth. Do you know what changed my life?
Cutlery! *Anon*



Did you know...

May Hill used to be a landmark for drovers where they would stop to water, graze and rest their animals. There was also a pub called The White Horse Inn on the southern slopes where the drovers could 'refuel' too.

If you'd like to contribute to the next newsletter with a joke, fascinating fact, photograph, special message, poem or something of interest, then send these to the Editor by 14th November.

Photograph of the quarter

A photo relating to u3a taken by a member will be published each quarter.



Holly Blue butterfly spotted during a u3a walk near Maisemore.

Martin Cole

Entries for next quarter to the Editor by 14th November

And finally...

We hope you've enjoyed reading this new look newsletter. 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:

- Anthony Snowdon (Treasurer & Membership Secretary)
- Anne Jones (Business Secretary & Speaker Secretary)
- Jules Everett (Groups Coordinator)
- Trevor Cain (Management Committee Secretary)
- Alan Tugwell (Vice Chair)
- Sandy Darrington
- Gary Smith
- Gill Mosely
- Martin Cole
- Carol Woodley
- Helen Cole (Newsletter Editor)



A huge THANK YOU to Alan for all his hard work as Chair over the last few years. His willingness to extend the role beyond COVID and continued service within the committee is much appreciated.



Behind the scenes...

We're always looking for volunteers to help with the refreshments and to set up the room for our monthly meetings. If you can, please consider volunteering to help. Even one month a year would help to spread the load.



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.