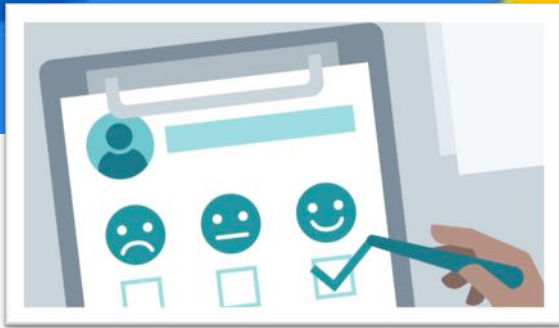


Newsletter



Our survey says...

A big thank you to all members who took the time to complete our survey.

The overall response was very positive and would suggest that our u3a provides an important opportunity for retired and semi-retired residents in the Newent & District community.



The top three reasons for joining demonstrates that members greatly value u3a as a means of socialising and that they are keen to learn new skills and knowledge whilst having fun. This suitably reflects the u3a philosophy:

learn, laugh, live

For more details on the survey outcomes go to page 2.

Save the date – monthly meetings

12 December – Christmas Social

10 January – Once confirmed, members will be contacted with the details.

14 February – Information will also be posted on our website.

Welcome

Firstly, a huge thank for all the positive feedback we've received regarding our Autumn edition. I hope we can continue to deliver an enjoyable and worthwhile read.

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.

I've had a great response from groups this quarter – thanks to all who've contributed and keep it coming, your news and suggestions are always welcome. 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.

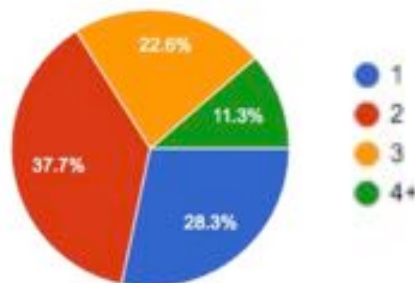
Our survey says...

...continued from page 1

The purpose of the survey was to ensure that our u3a is meeting the expectations of all members, so it's been disappointing that less than half of you completed the survey. However, the following provides an overview of the results based on the data collected.

The graph shows, of those surveyed, how many groups they are in. Interestingly, 28.3% of you belong to just one group out of the 25 groups on offer. Some members said they would get involved with more groups but are unable to do so due to other commitments or in some cases the groups of interest clash. Perhaps some of the new groups can offer something alternative at a time that suits. And don't forget, members are always welcome to try out another group to see if it's for them.

The survey captured some great ideas for future groups and topics for monthly meetings, which we will follow up and share with you in more detail to help assess their feasibility for next year. We'd love to see more of you at our monthly meetings, so your thoughts have been invaluable to help make this happen.



It was great to know that most of you (98%) normally read our newsletter and there were some very positive comments about the new format.

The survey also highlighted some challenges around venues, transport and parking.

To create a more sociable atmosphere at our monthly meetings we have moved to the larger hall. This allows us set up the room with seating around tables making it easier for refreshments and tabletop activities. We will also endeavor to ensure that all attendees can see and hear our guest speakers and others comfortably.

The committee is aware of rising costs for some groups and continue to explore ways in which to alleviate this.

Please note there are upper and lower parking areas behind Newent Community Centre which you can access via Station Road opposite the Fire Station.



continued on page 2...

...continued from page 2

If you have a specific challenge that prevents you from attending the monthly meeting or a group, please raise this with a committee member to see if we can help.

We know how important it is to ensure that

our u3a is meeting the needs and wishes of our members and that our offering is relevant and accessible. Hopefully, with your support, 2024 will be a great year for Newent & District u3a.

u3a Committee



We continue to raise our profile

Our monthly meeting is listed in the 'What's On' section in the monthly edition of Newent Focus.

The committee plan to distribute more leaflets, posters and even business cards at selected venues to attract more members.

Finance News

During September and October, although not budgeted for, we processed invoices for printing promotional materials to help increase our membership. These additional costs meant that no income was generated for these two months but we are still on target to generate a slight increase in our reserve.

There are some groups who are currently supported that need to continue to grow to become more viable, but the signs are positive.

Your committee continue to investigate ways of reducing costs and increasing income and, with your continued support at our monthly meetings and encouraging new members, our finances will improve.

Overall, the financial health of our U3A is good!

Tony Snowdon

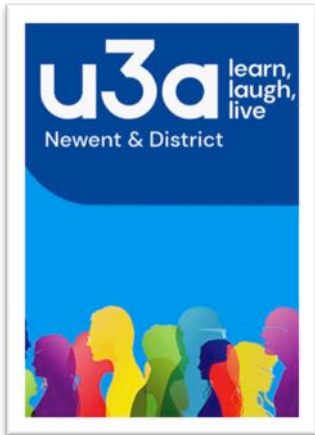
Membership News

Membership activity is pretty quiet at this time of the year but since the last newsletter, we have had two new members, who've recently moved to this area and, having enjoyed a 'taster' session at one of our monthly meetings, decided to join. A very warm welcome to them.

Our u3a still needs to increase our membership numbers and I would welcome everyone's assistance in achieving this. There are tri-fold hand outs and business cards to be used to promote our u3a and I would be grateful if you could take some to give to friends or neighbours, who might benefit in becoming a member.

Tony Snowdon

New Groups update



New groups started since last newsletter include:

- Art 3rd Friday morning of the month
- National Trust 1st Monday of the month
- Crochet 3rd Tuesday afternoon of the month
- Singing for Fun 3rd Wednesday afternoon of the month
- Table Tennis 3rd Monday morning of the month

If you would like to join or sample one of these groups, get in touch with Jules Everett, Groups Co-ordinator.

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

Week of month	Morning	Afternoon
Week 1	Mon – National Trust Tues – Walking Tues – Geneology (family history) Wed – French Beginners	Thur – Board Games
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

For more information about our groups go to the Groups page on our website at:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/newent/groups>

Committee vacancies

Just a reminder that we are still looking for a replacement Chairperson and new committee members. The roles really aren't too time-consuming or difficult but good fun and rewarding and will help ensure that our u3a continues to operate effectively in the future. If you're interested, please contact a committee member and join us at our next meeting to see if this is something for you.



Swap Shop Reminder



Don't forget our '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.

Registers

All groups are asked to submit a register of those who have attended their meeting or event.

The registers enable the committee to monitor numbers of non-members sampling an activity and members from another u3a who have joined a group not available to them in their own area.

The registers also indicate where groups might be struggling with too few or too many attendees and could benefit from some additional support via the committee.

Thanks to all group leaders who complete and send their registers to Martin, who has kindly taken on the task from Jules, of collecting and collating the data, and allowing her to focus on other aspects of her role as Groups Co-ordinator.



In the spotlight

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

My early career started with HR and Training, but since my mid-twenties, through my love of teaching, I have been working in schools, colleges and businesses. After having my first child, I've loved motherhood and from my mid-thirties I started fostering, adopting four of the children I looked after, two of which still live at home. I semi-retired 5 years ago but am still involved with two of my businesses, working just a few hours a week with each.



After moving to Newent in early 2022, I popped into a monthly meeting with our Newent & District u3a, only to find that it was in desperate need of new committee members. I signed up to give it a try. I was welcomed with open arms by other committee members and could easily see how much they wanted our group to succeed. I was encouraged to take on the role of Groups Co-ordinator, helping existing groups and starting new groups.

I now belong to several groups and have met such wonderful, warm and welcoming people.

Jules Everett

Cuppa, cake and chat

An afternoon catching up with others, sipping hot drinks, sampling a range of fantastic cakes and having fun – what's not to like!



Our Cuppa, cake and chat event worked well in the larger hall. There was plenty of room including break out areas for those who just wanted to chat or try a board game or play cards.

The majority joined in a lively game of card bingo and 'beetle drive' while a small group tried their hand at cribbage.



The lucky raffle winner walked away £15.50 better off. It was also lovely see so many people stay for an extra 5 minutes to help pack everything away. Thanks to all who attended for your support.

Group focus

Christmas holiday arrives early!

Our first holiday has been a great success with a group of us travelling to Torquay for a 'Tinsel and Turkey' week.

There were opportunities for excursions on most days and activities at the hotel were endless including darts, bowling, dancing, quizzes, bingo to name a few and entertainment every evening. The swimming pool complex was huge with two indoor pools, two outdoor pools, sauna, steam room, jacuzzi and spa.

"So much to do"



"Brilliant, let's do it again!"

"very convivial"



"Can't wait till the next holiday"



Look out for details of our next holiday in the Spring!

Events Group

Can we tempt you?

Events Group outings coming up:

8 December, 3pm – Mother Goose (Everyman Theatre)

12 December, 7.15pm – The Nutcracker (The Gateway Cinema)

17 December, 2pm – The Nutcracker (The Gateway Cinema)

Events Group



Variety is the spice of life!

Visit to Weston Hall gardens – Our host, Pelham Aldrich-Blake introduced the gardens describing its history, development and planting of many unusual plants.



“Great views from the garden room folly”



“We grilled the gardeners for top tips”



“Enjoyed tea and cake in the beautiful inner courtyard”

The art of composting – Ken Power shared his secret to make great compost in his garden.



“A bit like making a cake!”



“Lucy was very knowledgeable and answered all our questions”

Houseplant talk at Leaf Creative – Lucy, a young enthusiastic houseplant expert, explained how to grow houseplants successfully.



Coming up:

Dec – no meeting

23 Jan – New Year meal – venue TBC

27 Feb – TBC

Garden Group



A yarn of creativity

Once a month a group of enthusiastic crafters get together, open their bags to reveal a range of coloured threads and materials – it’s the QACKS!

Everyone is working on something different such as Tapestry, Crochet, Knitting, Patchwork and Macrame. In the past we have knitted for premature babies and Teddies for Tragedy. While we are busy, we chat about many things. Some related to what we are doing and others about the world in general and not forgetting that there is always time for tea and biscuits.

QACKS Group

Buy or sell?

The Investment Discussion Group or Money Matters has been established for about ten years. Recently the group has been meeting in a room at Aston Ingham Village Hall which has good facilities and is geographically well situated as not all the members live in Newent.

The meetings, which are held once a month, hinge on a virtual portfolio. Each member chooses two shares and their progress is monitored at every meeting: hypothetical buying and selling is encouraged. General discussion of financial matters also takes place.

There are one or two relatively new members and their knowledge has ‘upped our game’ somewhat. None the less new members with all levels of knowledge and experience will be made welcome. All they need is ‘interest’.

Money Matters Group



Autumn has arrived

As temperatures cooled and the heavens opened, we had to adapt our walks accordingly. Thankfully, after a flood alert around Apperley, David had a Plan B and led a small group on a trail around Newent, while sharing his knowledge of the area. Did you know Newent hosted a POW camp during WWII?

Walking Group

Autumn ventures with the Wrens

Weir Gardens nr Hereford

On a sunny day, we spent a happy hour or so slowly walking through a woodland of very mature trees. They were worthy of our admiration and we tried to identify some of them in a fun way!

We took the path down to the bank of the river Wye and walked back along the riverside path keeping an eye out for an otter! No luck today, but our lunch at the Blue Diamond Garden Centre made up for it.



October meeting topic: Water Pollution

We shared our tales of river pollution and I gave a presentation to share a bit about how pollution control measures effectively cleaned up the river Thames in the 1980s and 1990s. We concluded with a lively discussion on the issues and how we would resolve them – if we were in charge! If only...

Nature in Art Exhibition - Arctic Visions

Paintings by Nicholas Jones immersing us in the vast space and luminous light of the Arctic. Just to prove how subjective art is, we each chose a different favourite artwork.

We visited the resident artist and a walk around the garden admiring the latest pieces of sculpture. Then of course lunch in the café!



Nature Appreciation Group - Wrens

WRENS meetings are the 2nd Wednesday of the month, in the morning. We have a mix of visits and indoor discussions. To find out what's coming up, join my mailing list.

Ginny Birkett, Group Leader

Let's lunch

The Lunch Club is proving to be a popular event with great turnouts at the Travellers Rest in October and Walwyn Arms in November.



Dates coming up:

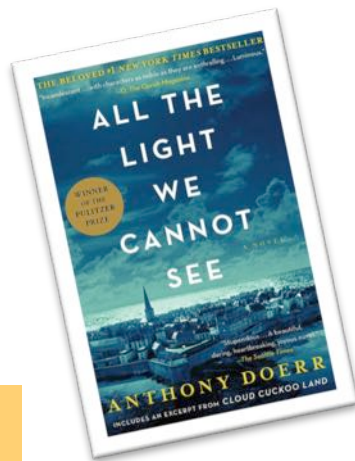
21 Dec – The Alma Inn, Linton
18 Jan – Kings Arms, Newent

Lunch Club Group

Talking about books...

The Reading Group meet in the very comfortable environs of Daffodil Court, (in Watery Lane) to discuss the Group's "Book of the Month" and any other books or authors anyone may have read recently.

Every book chosen is from the library's 200 'Group List'. Group members decide which books to order, which may vary in genre and length. There's no compulsion to read anything you don't like - it's equally valid to discuss why we do or don't like something.



"Did you see that Bernardine Evaristo has been hailed as 'a black hero'?... and people think she should be on a stamp."

A month is usually plenty of time for most people to complete a book even if you consider yourself to be a slow reader. The most widely recommended book this year was Anthony Doerr's "All The Light We Cannot See" which was longer than average, but just 15 pages a day tackles most books. The best books are probably not written to be speed-read unless perhaps the author is Lee Child or Simon Kendrick.

We recognize and value our differences but we also greatly enjoy being similar. We always end meetings with a cup of tea or coffee with a biscuit or cake and allow some time to get to know each other better.

The Group warmly invites both new members and visitors to see if this Group is for you. We meet every fourth Wednesday from 2.00 and finish by 4.00.

The Reading Group

Computing with confidence

Our friendly Group aims to help u3a members become more confident computer users, to provide guidance on how to use some of the features included with Windows computers and to explain the use of other software such as emails and Word.

Basics we cover include:



- setting up desktop layouts, backgrounds, screen resolutions, text sizes, screensavers and shortcuts to suit our personal tastes and needs

continued on next page...



- ensuring that our computers and our on-line accounts are protected with virus protection and firewalls and by using secure passwords



- connecting to Wi-Fi and understanding how we can stay safe when using secure and unsecure Wi-Fi networks



- how to organise and name our files so we easily find them again.

If you think our Group might be able to help you to gain a better understanding of some computing basics, maybe you should join us with your laptop if you have one, or just to take some notes during our meetings to try out at home. We meet on the 4th Monday morning of the month. Further information and contact details can be found on the u3a website Groups page.

Computer Improvers Group

Getting hooked on Crochet

On the 17th of October six ladies and myself descended on the cosy lounge at Stoke Mews armed with our crochet hooks and eager anticipation of either learning or improving our dexterity with a ball of wool and a crochet hook. Of course, several of our group could already crochet but some of us complete novices.

Those of us who were new to this craft were shown the basics and asked to have a go at a square of double crochet stitches by Ginny who had the patience of a saint, especially when I managed to keep losing my stitches! Hence, my square didn't end up a square! However, much fun ensued whilst trying to perfect this simple task.

Hayling Sunset - memories of walking the beach in winter with the reflection of the sunset on the beach puddles.



Galaxies - A variety of squares using shorter lengths of wool and crocheted together into a throw. I donated this back to the Recycling Centre and was told later it was bought as a Xmas present. Win win!



A couple of throws I made from bundles of wool I bought from the Newent Recycling Shop.

Ginny

A vest for Tony next?



To give us some goals to aim for, Ginny brought along some of her beautiful examples of crocheting including an exquisite evening bag she had made. Although my expectations are somewhat lower down the scale, I and no doubt the other group members, are looking forward to our next meeting on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 2.00pm. So if you are interested please come along and join us.

*Carol Woodley
Crochet Group*

Armed for art

We had a great turnout for our first Art Group session. Local artist, Glenys provided all the materials along with her expertise and enthusiasm for an introduction to silk painting. Despite some of us having done very little art since school, we all managed to produce some very colourful and amazing pictures, worthy of framing at the end.



Not only did Roses Garden Centre provide an ideal space with good light for art, but many of us stayed on for a tasty lunchtime snack while planning future art projects. If you'd like to join in the fun next time, please get in touch with Jules, the Groups Co-ordinator.



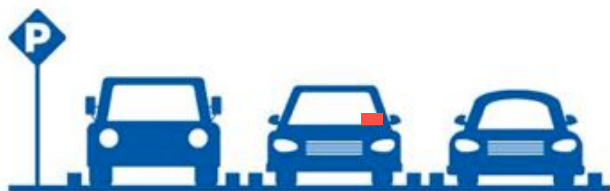
Coming up:
 15 December – Making Christmas cards
 19 January – Felting for beginners
 16 February – Lantern art

u3a Members Space

This area is dedicated to additional contributions from you, our members. However, the response this quarter has been very low, so, if there is something of interest you'd like to contribute to the next newsletter, please send these to the Editor by 14th February. It could be an interesting fact, a recent u3a experience you'd like to share, a short poem or perhaps a special thank you. Photos are always very welcome too!

Fascinating fact

The youngest u3a member is just 27 - (semi-retired perhaps?..)

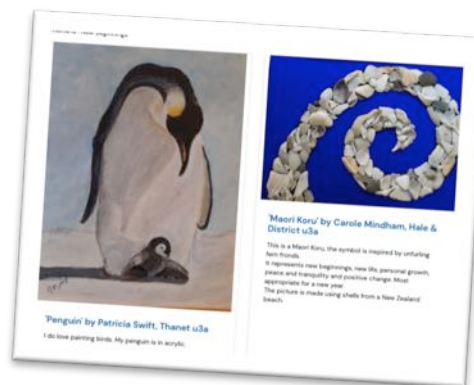


You know, somebody actually complimented me on my driving today. They left a little note on the windscreen, it said 'Parking Fine'. So that was nice.

Anon

Did you know...

For all you budding artists out there, the National u3a invite readers to submit an original artwork (based on a monthly theme) which could be published in their online gallery. Why not have a go.





Winter wonder

Some reindeer living above the Arctic Circle live in complete darkness for several weeks of the year. To adapt to this, a small area of tissue behind the retina changes colour from gold in summer months to blue in winter. This allows the reindeer's eyes to detect ultraviolet light and to see in the dark!

The Sausage Roll

In a bakery nestled by the street,
Where savoury delights and pastries meet,
There lies a humble, golden scroll,
A piping hot and scrumptious sausage roll.

Its pastry, flaky, light as air,
Encasing treasures beyond compare,
A savoury symphony, flavours bold,
Within that humble, beloved sausage roll.

A blend of meats, a secret spice,
Wrapped up snug, oh so nice,
Baked to perfection, a culinary goal,
That delectable, delightful sausage roll.

In each bite, a world unfolds,
A story in flavours, as history has told,
From kitchens old to hearts extolled,
The timeless joy of a sausage roll.

With ketchup, mustard, or sauce of choice,
It's a treat that makes our hearts rejoice,
At picnics, parties, or on a stroll,
We savour the warmth of a sausage roll.

So, let us celebrate this culinary delight,
A simple pleasure, day or night,
For in its taste, we find our soul,
The cherished, comforting sausage roll.

Trevor Cain

Photograph of the quarter

A photo relating to u3a taken by a member is chosen by the previous winner. It doesn't have to be technically brilliant, it could be a poignant or amusing shot, but it should encapsulate a moment during a u3a event during the last 12 months. No prizes, just prestige!



Thistles at Snowhill Manor NT.

David Bruce-Kingsmill

Entries for next quarter to the Editor by 14th February.

Don't forget...

Christmas Social

u3a
Newent & District

**Monthly meeting
at Newent Community Centre
Tuesday 12th. December
Doors open - 2.00pm**

**Free Admission for members
Guests £3
Including Refreshments
Mulled Wine - Mince Pies
Entertainment - Raffle**

Newent & District u3a

www.u3asites.org.uk/newent

u3a
Newent & District

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:

- 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
- Martin Cole
- Carol Woodley
- Helen Cole (Newsletter Editor)



Seasons Greetings

It's been an eventful year – celebrating our 10th Anniversary, moving to a new location and launching lots of new groups as we recover from the pandemic. Hopefully, we can continue to develop a vibrant and rewarding u3a group.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



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