



**Join an exciting self-help  
learning organisation**

**THIS IS  
NEWPORT**

**u3a**

**learn, laugh, live**

**[www.u3asites.org.uk/newportsewales](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/newportsewales)**

## What is u3a?

u3a stands for University of the Third Age. The word 'University' is used here in the original sense of the word, that is, a group of people learning together.

## What is the Third Age?

The third age describes a period of our lives when we are fully retired or working part-time toward retirement.

## What are the u3a's aims?

The aim of the u3a is 'learning for pleasure' in an informal way that will keep body and mind active, and promote physical and mental well-being.

No qualifications are required and there are no exams. The only requirement for membership is to be in the 'third age' of life. Members are able to participate in many activities in a friendly environment.

Members meet on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at the Dolman Theatre, Newport 10.00 - 2.30 during term time.

"u3a keeps the fun in our lives"

"u3a has taught me things I have missed along life's way"

"u3a proves the truth of the old adage 'there is life after work!'"

"u3a is the high point of my day"

"Newport u3a has changed my life"

"It is easy to join the u3a and everyone is made to feel wanted and welcome"

"Every Wednesday morning we take a break from our worries and cares and experiment with paint"



## **VIEW FROM THE CHAIR**

At the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (A.G.M.) of Newport South-East Wales u3a held in June 2023, I had the privilege of accepting my first year's duty as Chairperson. At the A.G.M. It was my great pleasure to be able to deliver to the membership details of how we intend to celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in November 2023, this was received with much enthusiasm.



On a more personal note, the A.G.M. was made all the more special as it was the first face to face A.G.M. to be held at our new home, The Dolman Theatre. I can barely believe how quickly time flies, as September will be our first anniversary here.

It is most encouraging to see such an increase in membership since returning to a full u3a programme following the restrictions of the Covid pandemic.

New membership potentially brings different skills and during my first year as chairperson, my intention is to meet with each individual, in the hope of identifying new skills which could help expand our u3a programme even further.

The hub of our u3a community lies within our café area, which enables members to see the

changing face of Newport, with the construction of Newport's Knowledge Quarter. The Knowledge Quarter is not only aimed at learning for younger people, therefore, our u3a slots into the Knowledge Quarter very well, not only in proximity, but also within our motto of Learn, Laugh, Live.

This brochure is intended to provide an insight into life within Newport South East Wales u3a.

I look forward to welcoming any new members who join our wonderful organisation.

**Julie Kennedy - Chairperson.**

**July 2023**



## **ALL THAT JAZZ**

This long-established group meets once a month to listen to a specially selected programme of recordings, exploring all genres of Jazz from its roots in New Orleans to Swing, Big Band, Latin, Blues and through to the Modern. Notes about the artists are supplied and members are invited to bring along recordings that they enjoy and give some background information if they wish. Who would have thought that Newport U3a has so many cool cats!



## **ART**

Rediscover your hidden talent, or find a new one, at this sociable group. Beginners are most welcome as well as those who are more experienced.

There are opportunities to learn about and work with a range of media, as well as to explore and develop individual styles. New members appreciate the tuition from the Convenor and the support and encouragement from other members. They quickly manage to produce some worthy samples which are displayed at their End of Year Exhibition.





## **CHOIR**

This established group has grown in numbers and stature and members sing in four parts, the traditional format for choral singing.

We perform an eclectic repertoire at churches, residential homes, and hospitals. We have also sung

at the Senedd, St Woolos Cathedral, Llanfrechfa Walled Garden and are the guest choir at Newport County AFC's Carol Services.



During Covid we rehearsed on the bandstand at Belle Vue Park, entertaining the promenaders and the cafe visitors. The Choir, in conjunction with Newport Playgoers Society and Out & About Newport, hosted a 'Concert for Ukraine' at the Dolman Theatre when more than £2,700 was raised for the Dignity Charity.

## **CLASSICAL MUSIC APPRECIATION**

It doesn't matter if you know nothing about this subject or have a degree in music, these sessions will broaden members' awareness of the rich variety of classical music. Join us, to listen to a programme prepared by the Convenor, on a voyage of discovery as we explore music through the ages, to discover the building blocks of music and what political and social events have influenced the 'sounds' of particular eras.



Members receive notes with suggestions for further listening.

## **CRAFT**

We love to have a chat and a laugh whilst doing our needlework which may be knitting, crochet, embroidery, sewing, or card making. Whether you want to learn a new craft or develop your skills, the members are always willing to help each other. We sell our creations at our annual Charity Christmas Fayre.



Recently, some members visited a friend's pottery studio for a taster session. We were shown some hand-building techniques before making our own unique pot or vase. After applying some decoration or texture they were stacked in the kiln for firing. We returned a few weeks later to glaze the pots before their final firing. The whole experience was a very sociable and therapeutic activity.

Occasionally we have guests to give demonstrations about making specialist items.

## **CREATIVE WRITING**

The aim of this long-running group is to develop writing skills whilst sharing ideas. At each session, members are invited to produce an article, story or a poem on a given topic. Our numbers make an interesting mix of experiences, knowledge and opinions, and together with imagination result in some extraordinarily varied pieces being produced.



Members wrote humorous poems and a funny radio pantomime specially for our u3a's Christmas Concert. Some also appeared at the Caerleon Arts Festival, on a local radio programme, produced and published an anthology of their work and attended two Study Days at different venues. A workshop is being arranged for the Autumn term.

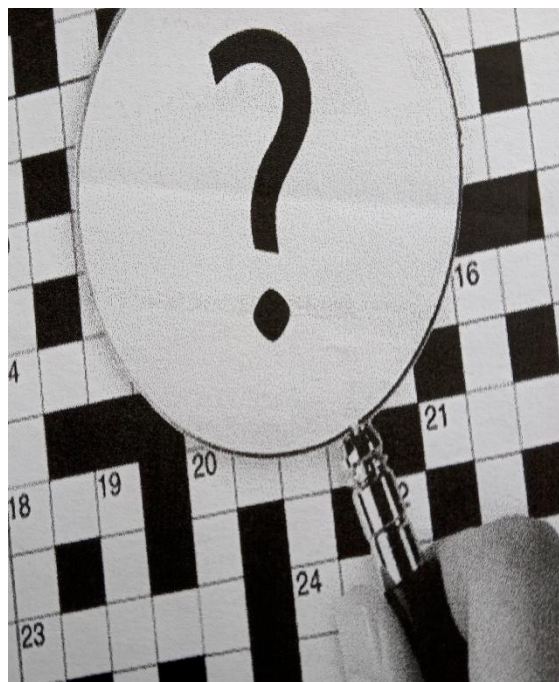
## **CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS**

These fun sessions will inform you how to unlock those fiendish clues whilst improving memory, vocabulary, and general knowledge.

There are a dozen different types of clues which we study on a rolling programme.

It's a good feeling when we solve a difficult clue and experience a 'Eureka!' moment and can have a chuckle at the crossword setter's ingenuity and deviousness.

We solve a couple of crosswords at each session and sometimes finish with a short quiz.



## **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

Members of this chatty group meet twice a month in a cosy corner of our Cafe to discuss local and world affairs, both serious and light-hearted. They get their inspiration from newspapers, magazines or issues that have affected them.



We have varied opinions which can create some lively discussions and a good deal of laughter. It's good to keep abreast of the news and solve the world's problems, whilst getting things off our chests.



## **EASY MOVEMENT**

Having trouble getting up from the floor after playing with the grandchildren? - Easy Movement keeps the less mobile of us limbered up and we also get lots of advice on health matters from the Convenor, who has had many years' experience as a physiotherapist with local and international rugby teams.

Regular gentle exercise aids both physical and mental alertness and relaxation, whilst putting those worries to bed! Members also learn about anatomy and how targeted exercises ease aches and pains - and it's FUN!



-----0-----

## **OPENING CEREMONY**



## **CONCERT FOR UKRAINE**





## **FAMILY HISTORY GROUP**

This group uses specialist websites and advanced techniques to research their families at the u3a, at home and in libraries. Many have made interesting discoveries and there's much excitement when someone manages to go back yet another generation. The more experienced members share their knowledge with our newcomers whilst furthering their family trees.



Linda Elwell discovered that her great great grandfather Thomas Boden, born to a family of seafarers, eventually became a master mariner and sailed his only ship, the Coquimbana, around Cape Horn to Chile. On the return journey, laden with copper and barley, the ship sank near the Falkland Islands with all hands rescued. Thomas died back in Chile and Linda has enlisted the help of our Spanish Group to correspond with the authorities there to seek details of his final years.

## **GARDENING AND WILDLIFE**

Our group continues to 'flourish' with more than ninety members who attend regularly. They are entertained with a wide variety of illustrated talks, all of which encompass the gardening and wildlife remit. The speakers come from both amateur and professional backgrounds and occasionally include our own members and Convenors. The subjects of recent talks have included The Police Rural Crime Team; Growing Fuchsias - a step by step guide; Tales from an Elizabethan Stillroom; Swifts, Swallows and House Martins; Restoring White-Tailed Eagles to Wales; Hedgerows - Nature's Highways; and All About Dahlias.



We have also organised a weekend break to Plymouth, the Lost Gardens of Heligan and RHS Rosemoor; and day trips to the Gwili Railway and Aberglasney Gardens; Batsford Arboretum; Cotswold Lavender and Hidcote Gardens.

## **FRENCH**

The enthusiasm for the French language is tremendous, therefore we have three groups and there's something to suit all abilities.

**Beginners** - We aim to develop an acceptable level of conversational skills, working on confidence as well as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation, so that we can get more enjoyment during visits to France.

**Intermediate** - We regularly revise elements of basic grammar and each week spend a little time on French conversation - not everyone's favourite part of the session, but we all join in by discussing a varied range of topics. We also enjoy reading French books that are suited to our level - we recently finished a series about famous people such as Charlemagne, Jeanne d'Arc, King Louis XVI and Napoleon right through to modern day politicians like General de Gaulle. We are now reading 'Le Petit Nicolas' a sort of French 'Just William'.

Those who go on holiday during term time are encouraged to tell us about it on their return - en francais, naturellement!

**Literature and Conversation** - We practise French conversation with no prepared scripts (though it's worthwhile revising some words beforehand). We are lucky to have two French speakers who add an invaluable dimension to the session. We read from contemporary French literature and translate into English.

**The Groups  
singing in French  
at our Carol  
Service**





## **GERMAN**

**Beginners** - This is the group for those who would like the challenge of learning a language whilst having fun. The course is based on the BBC 'Lets Talk German' and will help you to survive in Germany. i.e. Ordering a drink, asking for directions.

**Advanced** - The members of this established group each make a personal contribution to the learning experience by conversing in German as much as possible. We have read and discussed several short stories, a series of detective stories and selections of Anne Frank's Diary. Members appreciate the modern colloquial language that we learn from newspaper articles.



## **HISTORY**

This group continues to thrive with more than 50 enthusiastic members. They meet twice a month for a programme of illustrated talks exploring all aspects of local and worldwide events. Following our move to the Dolman Theatre, we have installed audio and visual equipment, which provides a more professional delivery.

Members regularly go on excursions where they can experience history come to life, such as the Swindon Railway and Haynes Motor Museums, and coach holidays to Plymouth and Northern Ireland.



## **I.T. HELP AND SUPPORT**

Not getting the best from your computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone? Well, the Convenor of this group is offering tuition in small groups or '1-to-1' on how to make the most of your gadgets. It can be as simple as sending an email and taking a photograph, or solving a more difficult problem.



These sessions are suitable for all levels of ability and judging from the interest from our members, the Convenor is going to be a popular man!

## **ITALIAN CONVERSATION**

Develop your fluency and build confidence in a fun learning environment. Members have a range of experience and ability, but all are keen to improve and share their love of all things Italian.

We're a friendly and supportive bunch who aim to be able to read, speak and understand Italian in a tourist context. This is particularly helpful when we go on an annual holiday together to Italy. There we settle into a pattern of cultural mornings, long lunches, brief siestas and more leisurely al fresco dinners - perfetto!





## **LINE DANCING**

This very popular group is enjoyed by both men and women and is ideal for singles as they don't need a partner to carry on dancing or stepping on someone's toes! But sensible footwear is advisable. Cowboy boots and hats are not compulsory, but Hey! ..... Whatever floats your boat!

Our sessions provide low impact exercise and are also good for the memory because steps and sequences are repeated in each dance.



## **LISTENING TO MUSIC**

This sociable 'ensemble' enjoy a wide range of music brought in by its enthusiastic members and played on CD, YouTube or Bluetooth; generally Classical but all genres of music are chosen including Folk, Musicals, Jazz and even Humour! It gives us the opportunity to enjoy the positive effects of music whilst interacting with others. Some



members present their own 'Desert Island Disc' selection or even give a presentation on their pet subject. We have also watched a film about Robert and Clara Schumann and followed a course (on CD) about Mozart's life and music.

We regularly attend concerts together and go out for a monthly lunch. During term breaks we continue the sessions at each other's homes followed by a stroll to a local inn for a meal.

## **LOCAL HISTORY RESEARCH**

Members of this group do actual research into aspects of our city's history whilst carrying out a number of projects. Key to all of these smaller projects is the compilation of an index of



photographs (both historic and modern) of buildings, streets, and other notable features. Members are encouraged to investigate particular areas or themes that interest them. There are also larger projects to involve everybody; the first being the history of Dock Street from its origins in the 1830s to the present. Other projects are likely to concentrate on areas, industries, parks, theatres, cinemas, schools, churches, chapels, mansions, the docks and the growth of Newport.

-----0-----



## **LOST GARDENS OF HELIGAN**

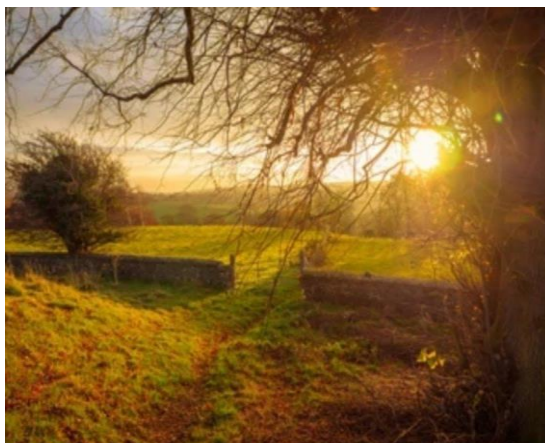
## **PLAYING BOULES**





## **MEDITATION**

**Meditation For Relaxation** - Uniting as a group whilst listening to a relaxing meditation written for us, members encourage a time of tranquillity and peacefulness. Closing our eyes to the outside world, this quiet time is for our inner self, caring for both mind and body. Each person enjoys their own unique experience. Good thoughts from within bring a restful peace, hope and comfort.



**QiGong and Meditation** - This group uses a traditional Chinese system of coordinated body posture, slow-flowing movement, deep rhythmic breathing and a calm meditative state of mind, used for health and spirituality. It is viewed throughout Asia as a practice to cultivate balance - Qi (pronounced 'chi') translates as 'life energy.' In addition to this, the group does mindfulness meditation which is a practice that seems to bring the mind's attention into the present moment rather than being caught up in thoughts and worries. These two practices, QiGong and mindfulness meditation, go well together and lead to a calmer and more relaxed mind and body.

## **PLAY READING**

The Convenor of this group has had a long association with The Newport Playgoers Society and is able to borrow scripts from their extensive library. Play reading brings a script to life and

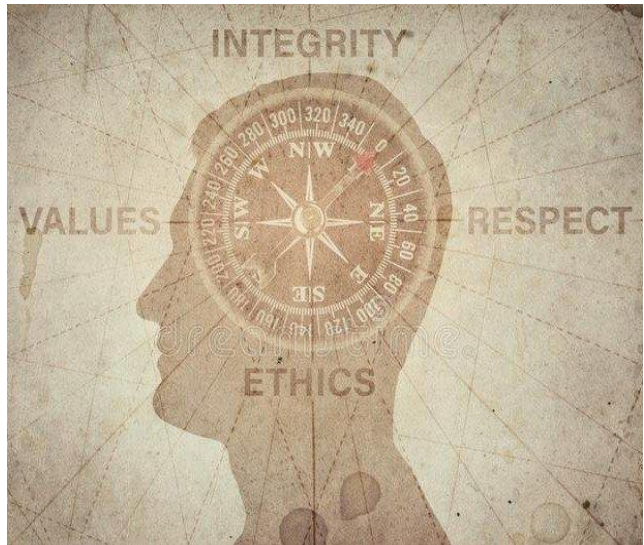


creates confidence. Recent readings have included Night Must Fall, Time of My Life, Key For Two, Present Laughter, Persons Unknown, and Under Milk Wood. In addition 'A Team in a Stormcup' written by our very own Christine Armstrong, which she is in the throes of getting published. Acting experience is not required and there are definitely no auditions! It's enjoyable because we don't have to learn lines or get first night nerves.

## **PSYCHOLOGY**

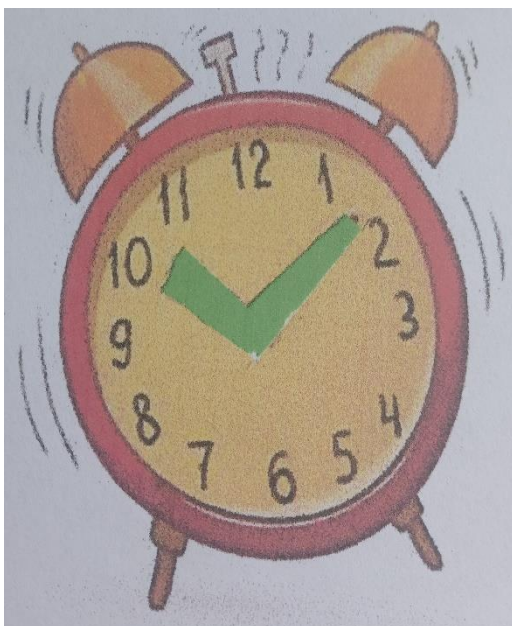
Are you a people watcher? Do you wonder why people do the things they do? Do you question why you are the way you are? Our members do and this is the group where they find out by exploring the human mind and its behaviour and how they can be influenced by others, circumstances or the environment. This subject has proved so popular that we are now running two sessions in tandem.

At each session we look at a different topic and the presentations may include Child Development, Differences in Competence between Men and Women, Neurosis, Psychosis, Autism, Schizophrenia, Stereotyping and Prejudice, Phobias, Different Forms of Intelligence and Relationships/Love.



## **QUICKIE QUIZ**

This is a recent addition to our timetable - a short monthly quiz of 30 questions at lunch time, between classes. Quizzes are popular for socialising and for a bit of friendly competition. The questions will be chosen to appeal to our members' ages, diversity of interests, and experience, with just the occasional 'snorter' to sort out a winning team - if you are unable to answer the odd question, we hope you will at least find it interesting!



Teams will be formed upon arrival so individuals are most welcome, and members are invited to take a turn at being the quiz setter.



## **READING**

Due to its popularity, we now have two Reading groups that each meet once a month. The Convenors reserve a number of a particular novel at Newport Library which our members read before the next meeting. We have varied tastes in literature so our opinions differ greatly and this results in some very interesting discussions.

Many embrace reading genres that are not their usual choice but are happy to try something new and pleased to have widened their scope.



-----0-----



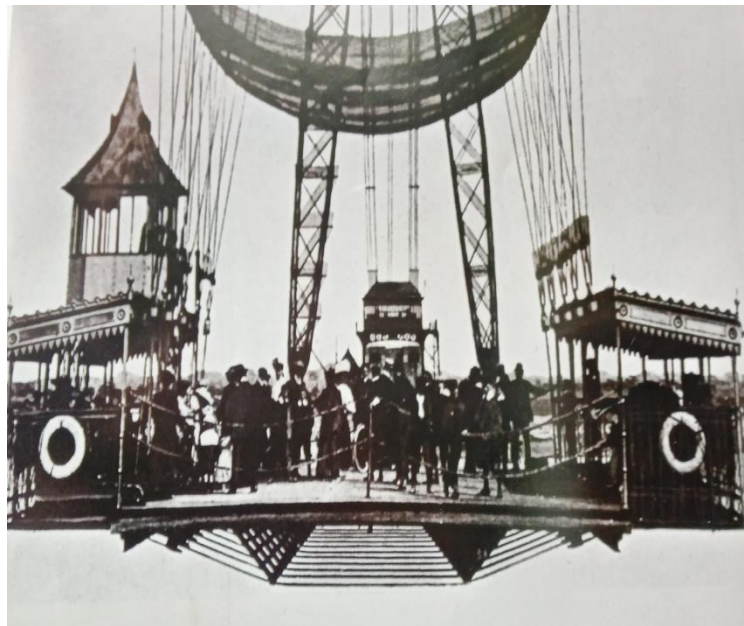
## **CREATIVE WRITING'S RADIO PANTO**

## **CRAFT GROUP'S COUNTRYSIDE TABLEAU**



## **REMINISCENCES**

Members of this group meet twice a month to share memories and recollections on a variety of topics. For example, we may bring in personal items of interest such as pre-decimal coins, old newspapers, photographs etc . . . It's a stimulating activity that brings real life stories of the good and bad times back into focus, whilst putting our lives and achievements into perspective.



## **SKITTLES**

Members of this sociable group meet twice a month throughout the year at the St Julian Inn on Caerleon Road to round off the week. They enjoy a two-hour session before retiring to the bar to listen to a live jazz band (optional). With its emphasis on tactics and teamwork, it is still a gentle way of getting some exercise.



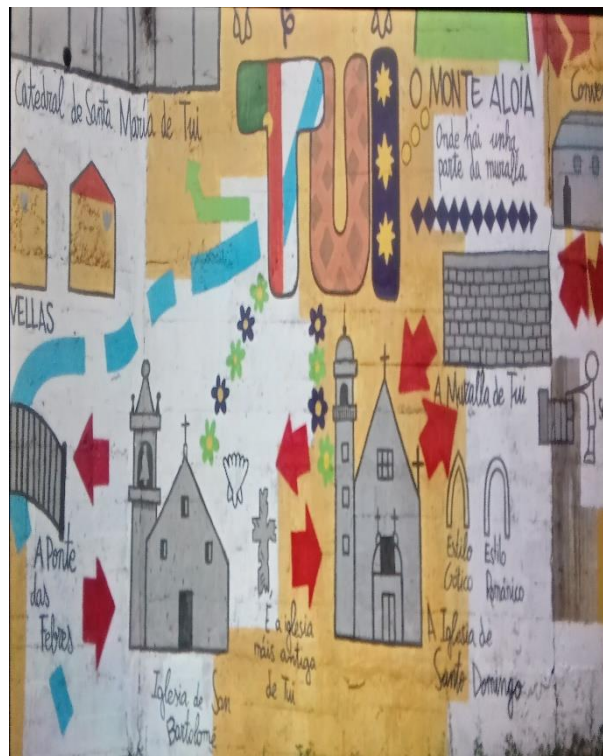
When it is too nice to be indoors, we play French Boules in the pub's attractive riverside garden. The teams, Les Escargots (Snails) and Les Grenouilles (Frogs), enjoy a leisurely afternoon in the sun before relaxing on the sun-deck to enjoy the beautiful views. The friendly rivalry and banter create a fun afternoon.



**SPANISH FOR FUN**

Members concentrate on learning what is needed to communicate in everyday situations which includes introductions and greetings, essential travel phrases and asking for directions, ordering food and drinks at a cafe or bar, shopping, health and medical emergencies.

We also study pronunciation and regional differences whilst focusing on the practical application of the language and basic written and spoken Spanish. This will stand us in good stead on our travels outside the tourist hotspots - and the locals appreciate it too!



## **STANDING PILATES**

This is one of our more recently introduced groups but is already proving to be very popular. Its members meet twice a month for this course of exercises. The aim is to focus on mind-body connection and breathing in order to improve flexibility, posture, balance and core strength. Pilates also promotes a general sense of well-being.



## **SUNDAY LUNCH CLUB**

Members of this group are a friendly bunch and love to have a good chinwag over a monthly Sunday Lunch. It's an opportunity to meet members from our other groups, and up to 20 of them share cars so that non-drivers can also get to the venues.

They travel near and far for their gastronomic feasts and regular favourites are The Greenhouse, Llantarnam and The Holiday Inn.

Members take turns to choose a restaurant and organise the event. All agree it's nice to have good company with which to share a birthday, a special occasion or just to enjoy good food together.



## **TABLE TENNIS**

The Table Tennis group is a recent start-up following our move to the Dolman Theatre. Members enjoy it so much that it is now run weekly, and over a dozen now regularly attend, playing singles and doubles games. A second table has been donated and everyone has plenty of opportunity to play.

Table Tennis is an ideal activity for us Third Agers because, as well as requiring skill, it provides good exercise whilst developing coordination and quick reactions.

We welcome players of all abilities to our sessions which are played in a friendly yet competitive environment - the emphasis is on having fun!





## **THEATRE**

This group has more than 40 members who enjoy attending live performances and are committed to supporting local venues such as the Riverfront, Dolman and Congress Theatres. It meets once a month to discuss and agree which shows they want to see, and the number of seats to be booked. The aim is for 1 or 2 theatre visits per month which cater for an eclectic range. At any one time a dozen plays, musicals, concerts and shows are booked for the foreseeable future.



Members also enjoy annual visits to the Welsh Proms, including the Last Night, and the Wales Remembrance Concert which is part of the British Legion Poppy Appeal.

Coach travel is arranged when travelling further afield, with pick-ups at Malpas Park and the Riverfront. When attending a matinee performance, they set off early enough to have lunch prior to the show and possibly to enjoy a little retail therapy, which all makes for a very sociable day out.

## **WALKING**

We have two walking groups of varying abilities that meet most weeks of the year. The **Saturday Half Day Group** walks 4-6 miles and members meet at Evans Street, Shaftesbury and share transport. The **Wednesday All Day Group** walks 6-9 miles and meets at the start



of the walks. All walks are led by their members and make enjoyable days out in the company of like-minded friends. They walk in a variety of terrains through beautiful countryside and if there is an historic feature, the leader discusses it on site. Several of the members have received First Aid training.

## **WELSH**

Are you passionate about Wales but not had the opportunity to learn its language? If you want to fully experience Welsh culture, enrol in one of our groups. Both use the same text-book, following Coleg Gwent Mynediad courses 1 & 2.

**Beginners** - A tutor-led class takes members from the basics (e.g. introductions) to simple conversations. There will be lighter moments with games and quizzes which will make learning Welsh an enjoyable experience.

**Intermediate** - Members are improving their knowledge of the language and are aiming to be able to maintain a conversation with a sympathetic Welsh speaker!



## **CAFE CULTURE**

Not only do we have more spacious accommodation since moving to the Dolman Theatre, but we have also acquired a former bar and its large social area surrounding it. We wasted no time in kitting it out and converting it into an attractive Cafe. Many members volunteered to serve hot drinks and biscuits, and a rota was drawn up for each of them to have a morning or afternoon shift each month. They all agree it is a sociable and rewarding aspect of membership.



Members quickly took advantage of this facility and the Cafe has almost become a group in itself as we are able to meet friends from other groups before, between and after sessions; and new members find it invaluable for integrating. It has become so popular that some even attend during visits to Newport. The internet, playing cards and board games are available which enhance our time spent socialising in this 'warm hub'.



## **OUT & ABOUT NEWPORT**

This is a separate organisation that arranges tailor-made excursions for Newport U3a in conjunction with the Convenors of our groups.

Day Trips have included the Haynes Motor Museum, Westonbirt Arboretum, Cardiff's BBC Studio, the Cotswolds and Ashton-Under-Hill Open Gardens. Other regular favourites are the Onion Fayre at Newent and Swansea Bowling Club.



At least twice a year members join 'Out & About Newport' for extended coach holidays - one in the UK and one on the continent. We have visited North Wales, Plymouth, Northumberland, Thursford Spectacular and Turkey & Tinsel Norfolk, Northern Ireland, the Little Trains of Austria, the Rhine in Flames and the Black Forest. For 2024 we already have the Isle of Man and Scotland booked.

'Out & About Newport' is also involved with fund-raising and in 2023 we raised over £6,000 for the Dignity Charity which provided relief to 300,000 Ukrainian refugees. This year we are raising funds for those who are remaining in Ukraine to supply desperately needed generators and power banks.

So far we have raised over £1,000 at a quiz, a book sale and a plant sale.





# 100 NEWPORT Playgoers

