

Hi everyone,

*The schedule for December can be found at the end of this newsletter and I will include it on our Face Book page, please let me know if there are any errors or omissions. The next monthly meeting will be at 10.30 on Friday December 23rd, there will be “entertainment” and mince pies! **Kath***

GARDENING GROUP



The original plan for November’s meeting was to enable all who wanted to try their hand at making a Christmas fresh floral decoration for the table. I had second thoughts about the practicality of this; the number of different materials members would need to bring, the time available to us and being novices at the skill would not perhaps have produced the best of results. Instead, I decided a demonstration would be a better option, members could then make their own at home if they so wished. As I am no expert having only ever done one several year’s ago I took lessons from watching YouTube videos. The result was not ideal but I hope it gave members the knowledge and some inspiration to have a go themselves at home.

The result of my effort (note the crooked candle!)

We will not be having a meeting in December. Our January meeting on Tuesday 24th will take the form of a lunch at the Upper Cock, Croesyceiliog around 12.30ish. If you were present at November’s meeting I have a record of your interest in coming to the lunch. I will be contacting **all** members during the first week of January to establish their interest in coming and will forward a menu after January 10th when the Upper Cock reopens after New Year with a new menu.

Hope you all manage to have a happy and warm Christmas.

Ann

FAIR WEATHER FLAT WALKERS

The weather has not lent itself to walking during November and Dori is still experiencing some problems with her eyesight, especially in open spaces and is looking for someone to take over the convenors role for this group, even if just on a temporary basis. There are no walks planned for December but if you feel you can help out in January please let me know.

Kath

CRAFT NEWS.

This month we were fortunate to have two visitors who came to tell us about the projects they were involved with. Marilyn Priday told us about a women’s friendship group she started 16 years ago in Newport. It is called Coffee ‘n’ laughs. The group do a variety of things including sewing and embroidery. Some of their work is individual and some work has been contributed to form a community project, which has been displayed locally. Marilyn also brought some of their embroidery to show us. I particularly liked the beaded work and some that was embellished with Shisha mirrors. These are small, usually circular, mirrors attached with embroidery stitches. The art is often included in Indian and Pakistani designs. I include some photos of the pieces we saw below.



Our other visitor was Sarah. She told us about Jean Genies. They aim to ‘make magic with denim’. It is a textile art project with an ecological message. It is also an up cycling project which involves taking discarded denim pieces (21cm x15cm), and decorating them with an eco-message. The pieces are to be donated to make a large textile exhibit in 2023. Sarah brought some denim and templates to get us started; all we need now is to get our thinking caps on. I also enclose a photo of an example she brought with her. This shows the embroidery inside a raindrop shape. It depicts fish being destroyed in polluted waters. The idea is to include an illustration relating to water or denim production. Sarah also told us she bought

up old denim clothing and embroidery designs on them to make them resaleable or reusable.

Thank you to both Marilyn and Sarah for an enjoyable afternoon and lots to think about.

We usually meet every Tuesday at 12.30-2.00 in St. Mary’s Church Hall. Our timetable over the holiday period is:-

December 6th 12.30-2.00

December 13th 12.30 -1.30

Closed for Christmas.

Re start January 10th 12.30-2.00 All meetings at St Mary’s Church Hall.

All Welcome.

Rose

HISTORY

On the 3rd November we were pleased to welcome back Roger James who has given us some excellent talks in the past. This time the talk was regarding “The Morgan’s of Tredegar House” and it proved to be very interesting and informative. The first member of the Morgan family to live in the house was Llewelyn ap Morgan in 1380. An obscene amount of money was spent on it but in 1409 there was a rebellion and they lost everything. Land was restored to them in 1450.

In the 17th century William Morgan married a wealthy lady and rebuilt the house in 1661. The house was modelled on the town hall in Amsterdam. It had lavish stables built in 1715 and they are Grade One listed buildings which housed race horses in the front and the horses for the plough in the back. There was the Brown room for banquets and the Gilt room for entertainment.

In the 18th century John Morgan occupied the house. He owned the property but had very little cash. He became rich again in 1715 when a man called “John the Merchant” gave him a large sum of money. In the industrial revolution Sir Charles married Jane Morgan in 1792. They owned 53,000 acres in South Wales and there was also a large amount of iron ore. They had rents from 1,000 farms and built a canal and invested in canal barges. In 1830 Newport was the biggest town in Wales. Sir Charles Morgan 1760-1846 was married to Rosamond with whom he had 11 children and it is believed he also had 11 children with other women.

In 1829-1854 Charles Rodney Morgan was in charge, Rodney Parade was named after him. In 1854 Captain Godfrey Morgan was in the 1st Lancers in charge of the “Light Brigade” in which 600 soldiers fought but only 200 survived, Sir Godfrey among them. The horse he rode was injured and

when he died, he built a monument to him (he was called Sir Briggs) which is in the garden of Tredegar House until this day.

The last of the Morgans, Courtney Morgan (1867-1934) was a spendthrift. He bought a private yacht and lived not in Wales but, as his wife was from Hereford, he lived with her there. Evan Morgan became Lord Tredegar In 1934, he was a hopeless case. He became a Catholic, installed a zoo and aviary in the house and held wild parties at which he practiced the occult. He married twice; his first wife died of an overdose and his second marriage to a Russian Princess was annulled. He died childless. He had a sister Gwyneth who was an opium user and in May 1925 her body was found in the Thames. She was buried in Putney but Evan bought her body back and had it buried next to her father in St. Basils Church.

He was succeeded by John Morgan 1908-1962 but he was declared bankrupt as he had to pay 54 million pounds in death duties. In 1951 the house was taken over by "The sisters of St. Joseph" to be used as a School. It lay empty for several years and was in a state of disrepair. In 1974 it was taken over by Newport Council and after many years it is now still owned by them but run by the "National Trust" who are restoring it to its former glory.

As in last month's newsletter, I stated that there was no meeting in December but a get together at Pages on 1st December.

The next meeting will be on January 5th 2023. The speaker will be David Husband whose talk is entitled "The Llanybi Murders"

I wis you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and healthy New Year. Take care and keep safe.
Regards *Merle*.

LISTENING TO MUSIC

We met on Zoom every Tuesday morning in November and listened to Contemporary Jazz, Film music, Flash Mobs and favourite classical pieces. The music took us all around the world and ranged from the Baroque to current pop songs. In one hour from 11 am to 12 noon we try to find something for everyone and one of the great pleasures is being introduced to music you have never heard before. Do feel free to just drop in and listen and let me know if there is a particular piece of music you would like to share. Meetings in December will be on the 6th, 13th and 20th and 27th.

Kath

LOOKING AT ART

There was no 'Looking at Art' during November and the next Zoom meeting will be on the **fourth** Tuesday in January (which is the 24th). This group meets on Zoom and with the help of short video clips and photographs looks at a variety of artists from painters and sculptors to ceramicists and architects. Members can simply drop in and listen but if you would like to share one of your favourite artists you would be very welcome to give a short presentation.

Kath

LUNCH CLUB



Our lunch club on Friday 18th November at the Blinking Owl was well-attended and enjoyed by all with good food, excellent company and amusing conversation.

A Christmas festive lunch club will take place at the Ashbridge on Friday December 9th. This event is being organised by Ann Gill so please contact her for details and menu choices if you wish to attend

MEMORY LANE



Apologies to all members for having to cancel at such short notice the meeting in November. The December date would be very close to Christmas and so I do not propose to hold a meeting in December but carry our "Granny's Attic" theme to 16th January 2023. All members are welcome.

I would like to wish you all a merry Christmas and best wishes for 2023 and look forward to seeing you at the January meeting. **Barbara**

POETRY GROUP

Thanks to Chris for another interesting presentation on the poet John Masefield. Masefield was known for his poems of the sea (as a young man, he was apprenticed aboard a sailing ship) and his narrative poems, although he also wrote a number of novels. He became Poet Laureate in 1930. Among his best known works are the children's novels *The Midnight Folk* and *The Box of Delights*, and the poems *The Everlasting Mercy* and "Sea-Fever".

Masefield was born in Ledbury. His mother died when he was six, and he went to live with his aunt. His father died soon afterwards. He went to the King's School where he was a boarder between 1888 and 189. He left school to join HMS Conway, both to train for a life at sea and to break his addiction to reading, of which his aunt thought little. It was aboard the Conway that Masefield's love of story-telling grew. While he was on the ship he listened to the stories told about sea lore, and decided that he was to become a writer and story-teller himself.

There won't be poetry at the LMC on the 22nd of December, but we will be having a Zoom meeting on the 8th of December. We will be reading poems by any modern poet. So please send me your choices by the 7th if possible. Do join us if you can, **Ruth**

QUIZ



Another successful quiz was held this month. With a good turn-out of 15 we were able to split into 3 teams of 5, The Usual Suspects, Les Quizerables & Densa. It was a close-run match all the way through, with Densa finally taking the No 1 spot with a very admirable score of 91, closely followed by The Usual Suspects with 90.5 & Les Quizerables coming a very respectful 3rd with 88. Thanks to Chris as question-master making us all feel relaxed and a least a little bit intelligent! Please join us for a fun packed couple of hours on the first Friday of each month at the Ashbridge at 2:00pm. **Helen**

READING SHORT STORIES

This month we finally found out what happened when the 'murderous' painter was taken into police custody – but did he do it. We came to the end of Beryl's Sherlock Holmes mystery and enjoyed a very strange Dylan Thomas story. Merle provided a story that she had written and we also learnt about Lear's wife. There were further adventures of the young woman seeking out Totem Poles in the wilds of Canada back in the nineteenth century and Anthea provided a biography of Daniel Lambert (1770 –1809) who was a gaol keeper and animal breeder from Leicester, famous for his unusually large size.



As always the stories were many and varied and at the face to face meeting Pam played us part of an audio book which dealt with a catalogue of mistakes when an aircraft took off. I'm glad none of us were due to fly anytime soon.

In one of Janet's articles there were recollections of the war years and in particular the wearing of gas masks by school children. As you can see from the photograph Janet has provided this also applied to babies. Quite a chilling photograph which unfortunately resonates with what is happening in the world today.



We usually meet on Zoom each Monday at 2 pm and once a month at my home. In December we will only be meeting on Zoom on December 5th and 12th.

SCRABBLE

Scrabble will now be held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 2 o'clock. The next one will be Wednesday 14th December at my house. For more information please ring me. Regards, *Ruth*

WHIST



The last meeting of the year will be on Thursday December 15 at 2pm in the main hall at LMC. A warm welcome to all.
Margaret

VIEWPOINT:

Despite the fact that a number of our regulars were unable to attend we had a good turnout with two new faces in our midst. The presentation on **1957** by Rob Wilkinson was informative and interesting and formed the basis of lively discussion. Rob told us how in that year, he was a young child living in Porthcawl, with a Dad who had the most exciting job of all times, running the miniature train to Coney Beach, which we all remembered with fondness. The number of facts about the year were too numerous to mention but included Rosa Parks, American Civil Rights activist refusing to move from her bus seat in Alabama, the Treaty of Rome, which established the European Economic Union was signed, Stirling Moss won the Grand Prix at Aintree, a major train crash killing many people occurred at Lewisham, there was an Asian Flu pandemic resulting in 20,000 deaths, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan told us we'd "never had it so good" and Warwick City Council became the first local authority to install a computer.

The list went on, each fact generating discussion about how times have changed with both positive and negative effects. It ended with an explanation of "why 1957". The answer being that a team of academics from Warwick University had scoured newspapers and agreed that 1957 publications included the most uplifting words (improving, optimistic, cheerful etc.) concluding that 1957 was one of the happiest years in British history! Thank you Rob for a very enjoyable morning.

And to add to the excitement – next month's meeting (Friday 16th December) will tell the story of how our very own Carol Brangham and her quiz team travelled to Glasgow in 2016 to take part in the much loved "**Eggheads**" TV quiz show. Carol's presentation will include a fabulous collection of photographs and a video recording of the show which ended in a cliff-hanger. Do come along and join us, if only to hear Carol saying "ooh eck" on national TV.

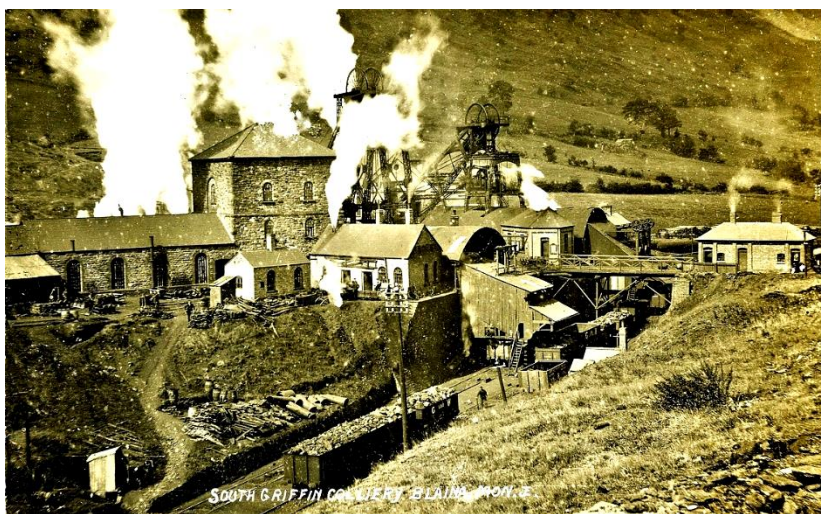
WALKING GROUP

Ebbw Fach Trail

Owing to prior commitments, our only walk in November took place later than usual. In a week that had been marred by a lot of rain we were lucky to have one of the few dry days for our outing. Ten walkers turned out, to be rewarded by some sunshine. Starting from Abertillery Park we followed a lane up the valley and, in a few minutes arrived at the ground of Abertillery Rugby Football Club. It is thought that Abertillery RFC was formed in 1901 from the combination of two local teams, Abertillery Harlequins and Abertillery Old Town. In 1906 the club won the Monmouthshire League, repeating the feat two years later. It was subsequently awarded "First Class" status by the Welsh Rugby Union and allowed to play against the touring Australian "Wallabies", who it held to a 3-3 draw. In the 1980s Abertillery regularly finished in the top six of the unofficial Welsh championship but, with the introduction of professionalism in 1995, the club found it difficult to compete in the new harsh financial world of rugby.

We passed behind the grandstand and crossed some open ground to the banks of the Ebbw Fach River, where we picked up the start of the Ebbw Fach Trail. The Ebbw Fach Valley was once an important industrial centre for the iron and coal industry, but removal of the old industrial scars has turned it into a pleasant leisure area. The Ebbw Fach Trail covers a total of almost 16 kilometres from Llanhilleth to Brynmawr, and we were following the section from Abertillery to Blaina. Although the main valley road between these two towns was only a short distance away, trees screened us from the traffic. As we followed the metalled path alongside the river we could have been in the depths of the country.

After a short while we came to a picturesque stone bridge with two arches. This used to provide access to the South Griffin Colliery that had once stood on the hillside to our left. The first pit was sunk at the colliery in the early 1880's. The colliery was closed in 1921 and subsequently became utterly derelict. The site was later used as a location for some of the scenes in the 1935 film



"Shape Of Things To Come", based on the novel by H G Wells. On our right had once stood the old Rose Heyworth Colliery which was sunk in 1872, its first coal being raised in 1874. For many years, Rose Heyworth was connected for pumping and ventilation to the South Griffin Colliery.

Our path continued to wind pleasantly beneath the trees, following the river upstream until it eventually joined the Old Blaina Road. Here we left the trees behind but were compensated by views of the open hillside on either side. As we approached Blaina the road turned away from the river but re-joined it within a few minutes after making a short loop. With the river on our right we followed it downstream on a narrow path winding under trees. On our left we saw four large rocks on which were carved a series of riddles in the form of "My first is in coal...". Unfortunately time and weather had largely obscured the text so that we were unable to make out its full message. Within a few minutes we had re-joined our outward path on the Old Blaina Road.

We retraced our way along this and then down the Ebbw Fach Trail and were back at our starting point having enjoyed a very pleasant two and a quarter hour walk.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The u3a National Newsletter is filled with information, stories and advice from across the u3a movement. If you go to <https://www.u3a.org.uk/news/newsletter> you will be able to access the current edition and copies from previous months.

Most of you will know we also have our own website and the address is: <https://u3asites.org.uk/torfaen/home> and here you can find lots of information about Torfaen u3a.

There is also a closed (**private**) Facebook page for Torfaen u3a members, just type **Kath's u3a Group** in the search box and make a request to join.

Llanyrafon Methodist Church

For information – The church is holding a Christmas Sale on 26th November.



They will also be providing a Christmas meal and entertainment on Christmas Day for anyone on their own. The cost is flexible but you will need to book if you require a meal.

Members who had a meal in the church café after our monthly meeting were very positive about this community project and suggested it might be of interest to other members.

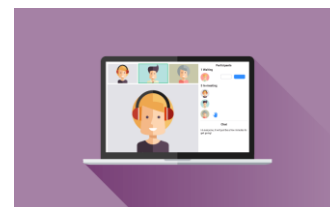


BRIEF NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE ROOM

Torfaen u3a Minutes of Committee Meeting held Thursday 10 November, 2022, on Zoom

Treasurer's Report

Money in Bank	£1524.93	Petty Cash	£ 35.47	TOTAL
	£1560.40	Number of Members	104	



Network Contact's Report

Dave reported back on the Wales Trustee meeting which took place on 24 October, attended by Hilary Jones, our representative on the Executive Board. Among the issues raised were dissatisfaction with the direction in which Head Office appears to be going, the apparent inaccessibility of the Trust's financial records, lack of clarity in who does what role, difficulties in communication and lack of response to enquiries. Hilary Jones agreed to feedback these issues to Head Office. Dave will attend a regional meeting scheduled for 28 November.

Minutes of FSC Meeting

Minutes of Finance Sub Committee meeting and supplementary notes had been circulated. Following a discussion to defer a decision regarding membership fees until the January committee meeting it was agreed that the minutes of the FSC could be signed off.

December's Monthly Meeting

Various ideas were put forward – quiz, pantomime, mince pies – to be further discussed at next meeting. Kath agreed to discuss creating a short pantomime with Maddie Jones.

EDI –

Dori had provided feedback on the national Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion meeting held on Zoom on 03/11/2022 and it was agreed we need to continue to try and get members involved.

Details of Next Meeting 10.30am on Thursday, 8 December. 2022, on Zoom

TORFAEN u3a MONTHLY MEETING 25th NOVEMBER, 2022

HELD AT LLANYRAVON METHODIST CHURCH

MINUTES

1. Chair's Welcome

Anthea Wellington welcomed members and informed the meeting that she had not been notified of any fire drill planned for today.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

Correction to Item 8: "Sam Morgan" should read "Sam Mauger". With this correction, the minutes were accepted as a true record, proposed by Retha Durose, seconded by Bruce Westerman.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Chair's Report

Anthea Wellington reminded the meeting that the Committee is considering finances. To date, we have not received any notification of increases in costs regarding room hire, etc.

5. Treasurer's Report

Dori Thomas reported the following:

Bank £1466.93 Cash £35.47 Total Funds £1502.40

Total Membership 104

6. Business Secretary's Report

Dave Davies had sent his apologies. Anthea Wellington informed the meeting that u3a websites, including Torfaen, are unavailable at present because of an issue with the administrators, SiteBuilder. At this stage, we have no information on when this will be resolved.

Anthea Wellington reminded the meeting of items reported by Dave Davies at October's meeting, namely:

All Our Yesterdays – a new initiative to collect memories from members for a series of stories from the 1950s and 60s to share online. If you have personal recollections to share, your contribution would be welcomed. Find out more about this project by visiting the National website u3a.org.uk and following the links: **Learn/ National Programmes/ New for Autumn/ All our Yesterdays**

u3a Click and Save – a scheme for members to receive a discount on many big brands. To access the scheme, follow these steps:

1. Create an account on the u3a Click and Save website: u3aclickandsave.co.uk/x_
2. Click on the link in the confirmation email that you will then receive.
3. Log in.

Future Lives Event – next event is 'Designing A World for Everyone' on Wednesday 30 November. Book your place and read more on the Future Lives webpage: [u3a.org.uk/our-impact/ future-lives](http://u3a.org.uk/our-impact/future-lives)

Accessibility Officer's Report

Anthea Wellington reminded members that we are still looking for someone to fill the position of Accessibility Officer. Two people may want to consider sharing this role. In the absence of such a person there was nothing to report.

7. Network Contact's Report.

Anthea Wellington presented the following report of a recent meeting on behalf of Dave Davies:

There was a lengthy discussion on the Public Liability Insurance cover provided by Third Age Trust and how it applies to speakers, entertainers, invited guests, and events such as Open Days. Answers to all these can be found in Insurance Frequently Asked Questions. There was a long discussion on the responses to the Third Age Trust AGM received from the Wales Trustee and the Third Age Trust. Details of both these can normally be found on the South Wales Network webpage but unfortunately all websites (including our own) that are based on SiteBuilder have been temporarily suspended. I will be notified by email when they are once more available.

The South Wales Network webpage also contains a report on the November Third Age Trust meeting but that, also, is currently unavailable.

8. Christmas Meeting

This meeting will be held on 23 December. A short pantomime is being planned. Additional offers to entertain from members will be welcome. Mince pies will be available.

9. Any Other Business There was no other business.

10. Date of Next Meeting Friday 23 December

Minutes taken by: Christine Andrews

Provisional DECEMBER 2022 Schedule

if in doubt please check with your convenor.

DAY	DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
Friday	2nd	2.00	Quiz	Ashbridge
Monday	5 th	2.00	Short stories	Zoom
Tuesday	6 th	11.00	Listening to Music	Zoom
Tuesday	6 th	12.30	Craft	St. Mary's Church,
Wednesday	7 th			
Thursday	8 th	2.00	Poetry	Zoom
Friday	9 th		Lunch Club	Ashbridge
Monday	12 th	2.00	Short stories	Zoom
Tuesday	13 th	11.00	Listening to Music	Zoom
Tuesday	13 th	12.30	Craft	St. Mary's Church,
Wednesday	14 th	2.00	Scrabble	Ruth's house
Thursday	15 th	2.00	Whist	Llanyrafon Methodist Church
Friday	16 th	10.30	Viewpoint	Llanyrafon Methodist Church
Monday	19 th			
Tuesday	20 th	11.00	Listening to Music	Zoom
Wednesday	21 st			
Thursday	22 nd			
Friday	23 rd	10.30	Monthly meeting	Llanyrafon Methodist Church
Monday	26 th			
Tuesday	27 th	11.00	Listening to Music	Zoom

No Dates for Fair Weather Walkers during December