



A Happy New Year to all

From The Chair, Averil MacDonald

New Year, New Groups, New You!

Monmouth u3a offers 50+ groups thanks to the kindness of members who organise get together to discuss or practice their interests and hobbies, in their homes, in hired rooms, in cafes, in pubs etc etc.

BUT we are keen to expand the offer EVEN further.

IF the following groups started up, might you be interested in joining?

- German Conversation
- Italian Conversation
- Walking with Dogs
- Gentle Walking (suitable for those with less mobility)
- Darts
- Bowls
- Skittles
- Quiz Team (joining pub quiz nights around town)

Or do you have an idea for a group that doesn't exist?

If we have enough interest in those listed above, or other ideas, the Committee can support the group to set up – and then off you go! What you do within your group is up to you!

I need to get an idea of the level of interest in each of those listed. If you'd be keen to find out more, please email me telling me which one or ones you'd like to see Monmouth u3a set up.

Now's your chance to take up (or restart) that hobby you always promised yourself!

Contact a.m.macdonald@reading.ac.uk to respond.

Committee

Your u3a needs your ideas for speakers.

Have you heard a really good speaker, or could you be a speaker for a Monthly Members Event? Monmouth u3a needs some really good ideas so please get in touch, if you have any ideas at all, by clicking here:

Do you enjoy going on trips?

If you enjoy visits to the theatre, ballet, music, places of interest etc and you'd like to set up a group to go with you, then Monmouth u3a could advertise this to all our 501 members so you can fill you coach. Any ideas, then get in touch with the chair, a.m.macdonald@reading.ac.uk

Helpers Group:

Your new committee is getting up to speed. But there's only 10 of us. We'd like to gather a group of helpers that we can call upon occasionally to provide extra pairs of hands. If you have a few minutes to spare and are willing to help out, then please get in touch with the chair at a.m.macdonald@reading.ac.uk

The next committee meeting will be held on: Thursday 15th January

Members Meeting

Cancer Research, Wales – Dr. Peter Henley,

16 JANUARY@14:30 – 16:00 at Bridges



Changing the face of Cancer in Wales

Come along and hear Dr. Peter Henley, Research Development Officer for Cancer Research, Wales. Learn of the fantastic research funded by this charity, giving hope to cancer patients of today and tomorrow.

Post-script

For all those who enjoyed Sue and John Exton's talk in October on the origins of the Mari Lwyd tradition and were fascinated by the display of horse heads they brought along, a scaled down gathering of Mari Lwyds is being held in Chepstow on the 20th January (with plans to have much larger gatherings from 2025). Further details on [Chepstow Wassail and Mari Lwyd - Dance - Traditional in Chepstow, Chepstow - Visit Monmouthshire](#)



Groups

Critical Thinking

The next meeting will be on 23 January at 3.00 in Ty Price. We will be considering two subjects:

1. Helen Mirren's casting as Golda Meir has been criticised on the grounds that she is not Jewish. Alternatively, the skill of the actor is in playing roles different from their natural personalities. What is your view?
2. What might be an appropriate level of immigration for the UK? What are the benefits of immigration and what the problems? What would be a reasonable immigration policy?

Anyone not on the group list who might be interested in coming along could email Simon Durrant at sncd@outlook.com or simply turn up on the day.

Science and Technology

Cliodynamics – is history a science? Iain Crawford on Tuesday 9 January at 2.30pm in the Bridges Centre

Cliodynamics treats history as science in order to understand why and how social systems change. Its practitioners develop theories that explain dynamic processes such as the rise and fall of empires, population booms and busts, and the spread and

disappearance of religions. These theories are then translated into mathematical models, the predictions from which are tested against data.

This talk will explain the principles of cliodynamics and demonstrate examples of how it has been used.

Local History

There is an urgent need for a convenor for this popular group to organise speakers and set the agenda. If you are interested, please contact the chair, Averil MacDonald at a.m.macdonald@reading.ac.uk

Origami

The next session, ably led by Tony O'Hare, is on Thursday 11th January, Estero Lounge, 10.30 – 12.30

Country Dancing

Come and try country dancing with us on the third Monday in the month at Bridges, in the ballroom.

This month it's Monday 15th January at 2pm, where we hope to enjoy some seasonal dances. We were pleased to welcome three new dancers recently and would love to welcome more. No previous experience is needed for male or female with or without a partner. All are welcome, just come along with some comfortable shoes and have a go. Christine.

Geology

10th January 14.00 – 15.30 Erratic Tales – Emeritus Professor Ian Fairchild

Looking at the recent project organised by the Earth Heritage Trust in Worcester to identify and explain the glacial erratics found throughout the West Midlands. Where are they now and where did they originate from?

Guests welcome for just £2.

Film Club

Our 14.00 film for Friday January 26th, at Bridges, will be. *'Ethel and Ernest'*, a British animated biopic starring Jim Broadbent and Brenda Blethyn. The film is based on the 1998 graphic memoir written by Raymond Briggs, and follows Briggs' parents, Ethel and Ernest, through their courtship and marriage from the 1920s to their deaths in the 1970s. It was broadcast on television on 28 December 2016, £3.00 for members and £4.00 for others. Includes and end of film tea/coffee/biscuits

Happy New Year to all members, Iain.

Drop-in Coffee Mornings

Every Monday at the Estero Lounge, Monmouth, from 10.30 – 11.30 Everyone is welcome.
Reminder: Coffee & Chat on Monday 1st January 2024 at 10.30am

Thirsty Thursday Club

Every Thursday at one of the pubs in town from 19.00 – 21.00-ish. Come along when you feel like it.

If you'd like to be on the Pub Club email list to receive locations and regular reminders, then please contact Averil MacDonald (a.m.macdonald@reading.ac.uk)

Photography Group

I've enjoyed taking photos for years, and I know that many other people do as well. I'd like to start up a photography group within Monmouthu3a. If anyone is interested in joining a photography group, then let me know.

Once people have responded, the people who are interested can get together to decide what it is that we want from our photography group. Wendy Lefevre

To contact me, please go to the "board and card games" group on the new Monmouth u3a website, and click [contact convener](#).

The new **LocalSocial** group is offering ideas for the New Year including

'**Napoleon**' matinee film performance at the Savoy Cinema Monday 15th Jan @ 4.30pm

'**One Life**' matinee film performance at the Savoy Cinema Monday 5th February @ 4.30pm

'**Monmouth Big Band Blows the Blues**' live evening performance at Savoy Theatre Fri 9 Feb @ 8pm

'**The Importance of Being Earnest**' live performance at Savoy Theatre Fri 8 March @ 7.30

Please join the LocalSocial Group via the website and you will receive an email with more information in the near future.

Yoga for Beginners (new Group)

Tutor: Veronika Pena de la Jara

Day: Thursdays Time: 0930-1030

Place: Bridges Centre

4 weeks – starting on the 11th of January 2024

Cost: £34.00

10 spaces available

To book your space e-mail: Sue@cobourne.com

Chair based Yoga (second single session)

Feedback from Doreen Green on the first session

At the end of the chair yoga session everyone wanted the classes to continue. Unfortunately, everyone was only 4 people, which is too few for a class to be viable.

Maybe you think that chair yoga is not proper yoga. From personal experience can vouch that the exercises we did were the same as those done at Veronika's Thursday classes. The only difference was that we sat on a chair and didn't have to get up and down from the floor to do them. A big advantage if you would like to do yoga and experience its benefits but have health/mobility issues. So, if you are interested, please do come along when classes start on the 11th of January 2024 at 1.30. You will be most welcome by Veronika and the four of us.

Tutor: Veronika Pena de la Jara
Day: Friday 26th January 2024 Time: 1.30 – 2.30
Place: Bridges Centre
Cost: £8.00
12 spaces available
To book your space e-mail: Sue@cobourne.com

National

Save the Date: 18 – 20 July 2024

I am sure many of you are aware of the forthcoming inaugural u3a Festival to be held at York University over three days, between the 18th and 20th July 2024. I love a summer school, and am planning to attend this one. I was curious if any other Monmouth u3a members would be interested. I am planning to catch the train maybe someone would like to join me or of course you can drive maybe sharing with someone else. I am happy to do any co-ordinating.

For more information, there is a dedicated u3a Festival webpage at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/festival-2024>, which provides all necessary information and will be updated regularly. Prices have just been published: the cost for the 3 days is £35, to include a buffet supper on the 1st night. Rooms on campus (all single) are £61.50 for both nights, which includes breakfast. For couples who wish to share accommodation a list is being put together of local B&Bs and other establishments. The planning of the offered activities is in its initial stages, but a few that have already been confirmed include: talks, play reading, philosophy, astrology, languages, music, art, walks, sports, yoga, Pilates croquet, tai chi, and singing.

If you are interested in joining me, please let me know.

Estelle Stevenson [Committee Member]
estelleannstevenson@proton.me

u3a Diaries for 2024 are available online, from Third Age Trust Brand Centre (you will need to register, if you haven't yet). They are priced at £4 each. Please visit <https://u3abrand.org.uk/auth/login>