



## From The Chair

By the time you read this Monmouth u3a will have passed the 620 member mark – that's 20 in the last week alone! From a low point just after Covid we have grown enormously and now offer over 60 different Activity Groups and have a social diary to attract envy from anyone – there's no excuse for anyone to be bored!

We are still keen to increase membership numbers so if you have a friend who may be interested, point them at the website ([www.monmouthu3a.com](http://www.monmouthu3a.com)) or bring them to a social event such as Coffee and Chat on Mondays at Estero Lounge at 10.30 or Thirsty Thursday Pub Club on Thursdays at Punch House at 7.00pm.

And we need helpers for the New Members meeting to greet and welcome new members, and talk to them about what Monmouth u3a has to offer. Please use the 'contact us' button on the website to find out more.

We are starting a new social group '**Quiet Chat and Coffee**'. Everyone is welcome but the atmosphere is intended to be helpful for members who find Estero Lounge background sound difficult. First get-together at Valerie's in Beaufort Court at 10.30 on Thursday 4th April see [Quiet Chat 'n' Coffee - Monmouth u3a](#)

We are also trying out a **Skittles and Darts** evening. Meeting on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April at the Royal British Legion see [Skittles at Seven \(plus darts\) - Monmouth u3a](#)

Finally our congratulations to Norma Williams for celebrating 25 years leading her 'Music Appreciation' Group. Her dedication to her subject and her inspiration of her group members are stunning! Many thanks Norma!

**Averil, Chair of Monmouth u3a**

## TRIP TO WATERWORKS

### A report by Mike Butler

A very interesting tour Monmouth wastewater treatment works was given to members of the U3A on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March. We learnt a lot including that all wastewater is screened to remove 'large objects', such as wet wipes, nappies and even grit. Apart from the risk of blockages, all this material needs to be removed prior to any wastewater treatment takes place. It usually takes three weeks to fill a skip which is taken to Avonmouth for treatment and possible use as agricultural compost. This really shows why we need to be careful what we flush down our loos.

And during heavy storms, excessive waste water (although highly diluted with rainwater) is diverted to a large holding tank. When conditions allow, this excess will be returned to the wastewater treatment process. However, in extreme events, it may be necessary to allow the [diluted] wastewater to release into the [strong flowing] river.

We were given very detailed explanations of the whole process, the regular compliance checks carried out and were very happy to answer all our questions.



We will organise another visit in September, watch this space!

## SURPRISE YOURSELF ART



Heather Elliot ran a very successful taster session for Surprise Yourself Art with all of the participants creating wonderful art like this from Mike Butler

Participants also wrote short story/poems to accompany their art. Mike wrote:

*“Whenever he wanted*

*Walter the Winsome Whale*

*Would water the whole night sky”*

The Surprise Yourself Art is just one of the successful new art based groups, including Drawing for the Terrified and Sketching for Novices. Thanks to all the new Group Conveners for their hard work on this.

## Events this month

These events are open to all u3a members, though a small fee may be payable. Bring a friend who may be interested in joining.

### Science and Technology Group

9 April @ 14:30 - 16:00

*From Gout to Heart Disease: the surprising story of a secret medicine*

Dorian Haskard,

Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine and Rheumatology,  
Imperial College London

Gout was common in the eighteenth century and considered incurable – but then an effective proprietary medicine named *L'Eau Médicinale* arrived from France. This talk will reveal how the active principle was discovered and its subsequent circuitous career: from the treatment of gout to the genetic modification of plants, then to attempts to treat cancer, and now to the successful prevention of heart attacks.

### Geology Group

10 APRIL@14:00 - 15:30

*The Geological Influences on the Redevelopment of the City of Bath and its Environs.* — Dr Kevin Privett

Most people will know that Bath was founded in pre-Roman times around a series of hot springs. The spa city was developed significantly in both Roman and Georgian times, to become the World Heritage Site that it now is. How many people, however, understand how the local geology has influenced the development of the area?

Kevin Privett is an engineering geologist and he will highlight some of the geological factors in the history of Bath and its environs, right up to the present era.

### Members' Event

16 APRIL@14:30 - 16:00

*The Rolls Family of Monmouth* – Roger James

Roger James will talk about the Rolls family and in particular Charles Stewart Rolls. How Rolls came to meet Henry Royce and form the Rolls-Royce Motor Company and why the company was so successful from the outset. The involvement of Rolls with early aviation. Rolls' early death with a short piece of film at the flying event in Bournemouth where he died.

Free to all Monmouth u3a members. Come alone or bring a friend, stay for a chat over tea and biscuits afterwards.

### Film Club

The Film Club's next film will be *'Jude'* on Friday 26th April at 2pm in Bridges. Thomas Hardy's final novel *Jude the Obscure* is brought to the screen, with Kate Winslet and Christopher Eccleston; [Jude \(1996\) - IMDb](#)

### Country Dancing

Looking for a new activity? Why not try Country dancing—a gentle social activity held on the third Monday at Bridges from 2p.m. until 4p.m.in the ballroom. We are a very friendly group who welcome newcomers. No experience necessary. Come with or without a partner, just a pair of comfortable shoes. Our next meeting is on April 15th and we look forward to seeing you there. Contact the convener via [Country Dancing - Monmouth u3a](#)



## Exploring local Churches

A visit to Kilpeck church, described by Pevsner as 'one of the most perfect Norman churches in England'. Frances Williams has arranged to visit the church on Friday 26th April. There is no one available to talk to us but there is a downloadable audio guide available.

Frances suggests we arrive at the church at 11 am. She will arrange lunch if enough people would like to have lunch together afterwards.

Please contact Frances Williams by email: [fhwsunnyside@gmail.com](mailto:fhwsunnyside@gmail.com) if you wish to join us.

## Craft

Are you interested in trying a new craft? The Craft Group meets on the fourth Monday of the month. If you think you might like to give us a try contact the Convener on [Craft - Monmouth u3a](#)

## Need to get out more? Why not go for a walk?

Walking is a delightful way to get to know your local area and to enjoy nature as it changes with the seasons. It is also a great way to keep fit! We are fortunate in Monmouth to have a wonderful choice of walks in our local area. As well as the lovely Wye Valley and the Forest of Dean, there are the picturesque farmland and villages of Monmouthshire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire on our doorstep. This provides opportunities to walk in the Black Mountains, the Brecon Beacons, the Malvern Hills, and the Monnow and Usk Valleys.

There are three friendly and sociable u3a groups offering walks every week of the month. All enjoy welcoming newcomers to share their enthusiasm for walking. We don't just walk we chat as well, so it is a great way to forge new relationships. In addition we try to incorporate a visit to a pub or a café to round off the day and complete the social interaction.

If you are interested in joining one or all of these groups go to the web site. **Striders** walks usually last most of the day and cover 7-9 miles. **Half Day Walks** are a little shorter, aiming at 4-5 miles but equally as varied. **Strollers** walks are less demanding and less strenuous which makes it suitable for anyone who is not a serious walker!

Here are the links:

<https://monmouthu3a.com/striders-day-walks/>

<https://monmouthu3a.com/half-day-walks/>

<https://monmouthu3a.com/strollers/>

## Walking for Those with less Mobility

Some members have requested a walking group for those with more limited mobility. Sue and Sam Hughes alerted me to the '**Fit for Life**' **Walking Group** which seems to fit the bill. It's not u3a, but why reinvent the wheel when there's already a good thing out there?

"The '**Fit for Life**' walking group was started by the Monmouth County Council in March 2013 and focuses on the those with **reduced walking capability** and their **friends and carers**. It takes the form of a one-hour walk on **flat ground** (fields and pavements) in and around Monmouth.

The '**Fit for Life**' group meet on the grass just behind/beyond the car-parking area **outside Bridges for a 10 am start on Monday mornings**. We are covered by

Bridges' insurance arrangements, and four of our walkers have undergone a one-day training session and qualify as walk leaders.

There is **no fee and no long-term commitment** -- the group meets **every Monday including bank holidays**, and if you can't make it or don't feel like walking on that day you don't have to let anyone know -- at 10 am the group moves off with whoever's there by then.

Afterwards many of us adjourn to the **nice cafe area** in the Monnow Vale Hospital. The walks are a good way of getting to meet people, and also a great way to familiarise yourself with parts of Monmouth that you may not have visited before!

For more information contact Janet Wall, [janet.wall@live.co.uk](mailto:janet.wall@live.co.uk)"

### **Spanish Language Groups**

The Spanish Improvers group continues to meet regularly by Zoom on Monday evenings. (A small fee covers our expert tutor.) Bob Crawford will be happy to hear from potential new members see <https://monmouthu3a.com/spanish-improvers/>.

There is clearly enough interest in a Spanish Beginners group for one to be established. Please contact Bob as above.

### **Calling Conveners**

Don't forget the Thank You Party on 1<sup>st</sup> May at 4.30 in Bridges. If you haven't let me know if you can come (and dietary requirements) please do so asap.

Also if you'd like to 'showcase' your Group in the next Newsletter, please get in touch.

### **Committee Request to Members – Gift Aid:**

Monmouth u3a is a Registered Charity No. 1090124 and can claim 25% of your membership fee if you are a UK tax payer provided that you have made a gift aid declaration. This is an important part of our funding.

Many of you have made this declaration allowing us to claim additional funding.

**Please note that you must inform the Monmouth u3a Membership Secretary if:**

1. There is a change to your name or home address.
2. The tax you pay on your income and/or capital gains is no longer sufficient to fund your gift aid donation

Please note that you are entitled to cancel your gift aid declaration at any time.

You can contact the Membership Secretary using <https://monmouthu3a.com/contact-us/> select "Membership Enquiry" from the top box.

Please be aware that if the charities you provide gift aid donations to receive back more than you've paid in tax then HMRC may ask you to pay the difference.

### **National**

For a range of ideas and wider opportunities go to: [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)