

## Usk U3A CHRISTMAS REPORT 2015

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The first hard frosts of the autumn signal that winter is fast approaching – time to make the most of our U3A programme of activities!

The Christmas Lunch at the Cwrt Bleddyn on Thursday 3rd December promises to be well attended, many thanks to Pat who has organized the event to include 30 minutes of entertainment. The hotel needs to know how many people to cater for just a week in advance so there is still time to register if you would like to join us.

I am delighted that the new “Painting for Pleasure” group has started so strongly in Llangybi Village Hall under the expert guidance of Sue Morgan, they have been meeting for 2 hours on a Thursday morning since mid-October for a productive yet relaxing session.

Reg Darge with Pat Kingsley organized another first earlier in November – a Quiz afternoon that was very well supported by teams from various of our groups and from neighbouring U3A's – many thanks Reg for this successful innovation that is likely to become at least an annual event.

Do YOU have an idea for a new group or event for YOUR U3A? – if so, please contact me or another committee member and we will help you launch your initiative, we look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes,

Keith

Keith Edwards

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### DUPLICATE BRIDGE AT USK

We play Welsh ACOL with a weak no trump, but we do allow newcomers to play the imprecision club.

Eight of our members used to play Blackwood, but unfortunately the

opposition cancelled the fixture; apparently last year Michaels provoked them with a Jacoby transfer.

Baron Gerber once brought along Astro, but he was black-balled for removing stamens with his mini-spade. Our esteemed member Benji has not been seen since he went off with two multi-coloured diamonds.

Seriously, if you fancy a hand of duplicate bridge, come along on Monday or Wednesday afternoon to the Sessions House Usk. No partner? No problem, we guarantee to find you one.

## CULTURE GROUP CHRISTMAS 2015

This year the Culture Group bid a reluctant farewell to Judith Choppen who moved from the area in May. Judith had done a wonderful job of starting and developing the Group over the past two years and I would like to record my thanks to her for her generous help in handing over the reins. Huge thanks, too, to Pat Kingsley who has been a constant help and support.

We have enjoyed some interesting meetings and visits including a talk by local artist Anna Haslock who demonstrated screen-printing and gave us the opportunity to try our hands at it. Some people were so pleased with their efforts that they took them home! We have also enjoyed learning about Newport poet W.H Davies from historians Monty and Tom Dart who showed their film and answered our questions about this fascinating man who urged us to "take the time to stand and stare".

In June a group of us visited the National Gallery in Cardiff for a private tour of their major ceramics exhibition "Fragile?". When our guide did not turn up, we were privileged to have Andrew Renton come and take us round the exhibition. Andrew is the Head of the Art Department, Keeper of Art for Cardiff and was the Curator of the exhibition. How lucky were we!

.. and there have been outings. A mostly sunny day for our visit to pretty Lacock Village and Abbey, organised by Pat and theatre trips to see Oklahoma and Sweeny Todd organised by Val Frewer.

Coming next year are a talk by the creative Team from Wales Millennium Theatre, a talk by the BBC Wales Archivist with film clips, plus talks about the Llanybi Murders and the story behind the folk song "Joe Hill". Out and about we will be behind the scenes at the Library of the National Museum;

tapping our toes to "The Last Tango" at the New Theatre; listening to the music at the monthly First Wednesday recitals at Newport Riverside and taking a summer trip to "Art in Action" at Waterperry House, Oxford.

Culture Group meetings and events are open to ALL members of Usk U3A so come along and join us for anything that takes your fancy. Wishing everyone a Happy Christmas and a very cultured New Year.

Maggie

### READING GROUP 1

An interesting three months of reading with a war time thriller by Simon Mawer 'The Girl who fell from the Sky', a classic from Arnold Bennett 'Anne of five Towns' and Kate Atkinson's acclaimed novel 'Life after Life'. The latter split the group and as such added to the discussion and a number of people agreed that reading it for a second time made the writing style easier to accept.

December meeting is a lunch at a member's house and we shall be bringing a story, poem, disaster, success or just a memory from Christmases past. In the New Year we start with 'The Goldfinch' by Donna Tartt

### READING GROUP 2

We continue to meet monthly and this year the varied selection of titles has created some lively discussions. Choosing the list for next year is a fun but democratic process and we are looking forward to enjoying more stimulating reads in 2016.

It has become a tradition that our December meeting is the showing of a film based on a book and there is always the option of reading the book if Xmas preparations allow the time. This year it we have chosen Daphne du Maurier's Rebecca so, along with festive food contributions from all of us, we are bound to have a good time.

The benefit of being a small group, just eight of us, means that we can get together in the comfort of each other's homes. However, it is likely that one of our group will be moving away, so there may be room for a new member next year or if there are two friends would like to join we can look at the logistics of that. Contact me through the U3A Secretary or via the website. As always, any of us would be happy to help and advise on setting up a third U3A reading group if enough people are interested.

## PARLONS FRANCAISE

Parlons Francais celebrated its 1st birthday in October. There was a cake with a candle but we managed to resist singing "Heureuse Anniversaire"

Learning a language requires years of study and application but our sessions are a leisure activity. We are there to remember what we learned years ago, and to add to it a little new vocabulary and a few phrases by reading, listening to CDs and cassettes. With repetition a few things may be remembered; if not they may be recognised when they are heard later on. That is my hope.

Meanwhile we have a lot of fun. I am delighted with the enthusiasm of the participants and with their willingness to have a go at speaking French.

Sheila Shepherd

## SCRABBLE

We have enjoyed some competitive games during the past months with two 7 letter word winners. We played at two different venues in the summer, on one occasion overlooking the Llandegfedd reservoir and last week we had a delicious afternoon tea at the Usk Garden Centre where we were joined by friends from the Monmouth U3A Scrabble group. I am delighted to hear that the Scrabble group were joint winners at the U3A quiz, well done. We look forward to more friendly games during 2016, the first session will be on Wednesday 7th January. Rosemary

## WALKING GROUPS

Why not come and join us either for a 2 - 4 mile gentle walk with stiles, gentle hills and good company.

The Gentle walking group meet fortnightly on a Monday at 10.30 a.m. in Usk main car park.

We generally return by 12.30 to 1.00 p.m.

It's a good, healthy way to combat the gloomy days in good company.

Walk leaders always welcome.

Just be sure to dress appropriately.

If these are too ambitious, then maybe a monthly coffee walk would suit you.

We use our bus pass to walk in Raglan/Monmouth and Caerleon, as well as around Usk. These walks are just three quarters of an hour with a coffee and sometimes a place of interest or talk included.

There are no stiles or hills on these walks.

INTERESTED? contact Myra on 01291 673377