

# Usk Newsletter September 2017

## Chairman's Report

2017 is providing us with a number of challenges. Together with the treasurer I attended an all Wales U3A conference aimed to establish ways to encourage involvement by members in running individual U3A's and understand why this wasn't the always the case. Significantly, we were given the guiding principles of the U3A which neither of us were fully aware of.

Without defining these fully in substance it means we learn for enjoyment using the knowledge we ourselves possess helping others and making it easy for others to join us. I am aware we don't always do this but we do need volunteers to step up to help as officers on the committee and to act as convenors either individually or as a group. We as individuals should be prepared to assist and deputise as convenors as the need arises –otherwise groups will close due to retirement or ill health. There is a need to identify a line of succession to all posts.

We are now at the point with the Culture group where there is no identified convenor BUT we do have a working party and you should already be aware of a set of proposals to keep the group running- perhaps with a slightly different emphasis. We have a programme fixed till December and possibly January. In essence we are trying to organise 8-9 meetings a year with individual groups taking responsibility for organising each one. Maybe the format will become more like a monthly social meeting that most U3A's have. Some groups have already replied positively so I remain hopeful.

In addition to this we have drafted a welcome letter which will be sent to all future new members.

I hope you have all had an enjoyable summer (such that it's been) and any holidays went well. For my part I will be away for most of September visiting my daughter in Oregon and then a self-drive tour of the Rocky Mountains in Canada. (Perhaps if anyone has had a particularly interesting or educational holiday it could be the basis of a talk to other members?)

## **Usk U3a Painting For Pleasure**

The group meets every Thursday from 10am-12.30 in Llanybi Village Hall. The charge is £2.50 per session with tea and biscuits.

The group has just completed its second year but absolute beginners who may be thinking of joining need have no fear. We are going back to basics in September looking afresh at themes such as Line and Tone, Colour, Perspective, Portraits (human and animal), Landscape (rural and urban) and Illustration (combining words and images).

We had a successful exhibition of our work in the hall in July and we intend repeating the idea with a Christmas Show in December. Each week's subjects are set in advance so members have plenty of time to collect their thoughts and ideas. New members will not need much equipment. Paper, pencils and a paintbox is enough to get you started.

Convenor Sue has been teaching children and adults for many years and she is always on hand with tips, tricks and advice. The U3A prides itself on being a shared learning experience and all members are encouraged to share their own skills, knowledge and experience at every session.

Llanybi Village Hall is a warm, spacious, clean environment with plenty of tables to spread work. The group is friendly and supportive to everyone who wishes to can come along. Remember you can always sample a few sessions before committing.

Contact...

Sue Morgan (01633 450209) for more details.

## **Parlons Francais**

Parlons Francais is primarily a French conversation group. We meet in Usk Museum every two weeks on Thursday afternoons from 2 to 3.30. Dates until the start of 2018 are: 14th September, 12th and 26th October; 9th and 23rd November; 7th December; 4th January. Please note that there will be no session on September 28th.

A text is sent out a week prior to our meeting and that will sometimes be accompanied on the day by a CD or cassette. We usually read it and translate it and often it results in a discussion. We listen occasionally to a French song, we do puzzles and we role play. We definitely do not do grammar! People are encouraged to talk about what they have done in the previous two weeks, to talk about their family or recent holidays and this often leads to questions and answers. Emphasis is more on communication than on impeccable French.

No particular qualifications are required but it's a good idea if participants have reached about 'O' Level standard.

Convener: Sheila Shepherd

email: [sheilashepherdusk@gmail.com](mailto:sheilashepherdusk@gmail.com)

tel: 01291 673935

## **Gardening Group**

We have had a very successful year to date and have covered a number of very interesting areas.

Our meetings have included talks on Roses, The Incredible Edibles, Why are plants fragrant? We have constructed floral displays in pots, we have visited a group of members gardens and The Secret Garden Nursery where one of the owners gave us a talk about the nursery.

The Summer months of July, August and September we visit gardens of interest. In July we had an very interesting guided tour of Derry Watkins garden at her Special Plants Nursery near Bath.

Closer to home in August as we visited Ross and Elizabeth Murray's beautiful garden at Llanover. They gave us a very enjoyable guided tour of there garden with some of the history of the estate. In September we are visiting a garden in Goodrich to view some prairie style planting.

From October we shall be meeting on the second Friday of the month. These meetings will be talks but there is no fixed program as yet. We are hoping to meet in the Garden room of Morris's Garden centre for October and November and subjects that have been suggested include houseplants and suitable plants for winter pots..

December will find us back in the hall in Llangbi for our Christmas meeting when we hope to be making Christmas wreaths or table decorations using greenery from our gardens. Last year this was very popular and some very creative ideas were evident.

Our meetings start at 2 pm and run for 2 hours. New members are very welcome.

Margaret Hatfield Convenor

## **Reading Group 1**

As reported at the AGM we are now running with 10 members who regularly meet. We meet on the 3rd Thursday of each month in the afternoon and we have very lively discussions on the books that are chosen.

We try to use the library reading sets at least 3 times a year but this can be a problem when the literary content of the book does not live up to the original description.

The remaining books are usually recommended by a member.

Being a member of a reading group means, in the course of a year, you will get to read a book you might never have chosen to read yourself. This can be both good and bad but is never uninteresting.

We are unaware that there are any members of U3A interested in joining a reading group at present. If you are interested please contact one of the Reading Group convenors.

Alma Jones 01291 671379

Margaret Hatfield 01291 652972

Joint convenors

## Reading Group 2

We don't take a break for the summer holidays and have continued our Thursday morning gatherings on the first Thursday of each month.

Sorry we cannot accept any more to join us as we meet in each others homes and 8 is the maximum to fit in some rooms!

However, we would be happy to help set up a third group if there are enough people interested. I am happy to start compiling a list.

Rosemary Cochrane 01291 671567

## Monday Walking Group

These are generally gentle walks with some stiles and hills. As the ground can be wet and muddy, a stout, waterproof pair of walking shoes, preferably boots is recommended.

We meet in Usk Main Car Park, near the rear of the Museum on alternate Mondays for a 10.00 a.m. start, and walk for 2 – 4 miles.

We take a small snack and drink and usually stop for a 10 minute break.

The walks for the next four months are:-

September 11th – Allt-y-Bella

September 25th – Llandeny/Llandenny Walks

October 9th – Monkswood/Usk Valley walk

October – 23rd – Goetre

November 6th – I'm away but hopefully someone will volunteer to lead a Castle Woods walk

November 20th – Usk/Mayfield/Cefn Isla

December 4th - Shorter walk around far side of the reservoir/Sluvad.

December 18th - Mince pie walk – area to be confirmed

January 1st 2018 will be the first walk of the New Year. As it is a Bank Holiday I will confirm this later.

## Coffee Walks

These continue to be run on the first Friday of every month

For more information, please contact me – Myra 01291 673377

## Scrabble

The Scrabble group continues to meet alternate Wednesday afternoons from 2 - 4 p.m. There is a charge of £1 to cover the costs of tea and biscuits. We play the standard game but also have the Welsh version, Super Scrabble and a large print edition for people who have visual difficulties. Chocolate is awarded to the winners of each game, a special prize is given for 7 letter words and a super special prize will be presented at the end of the year to the person who has the highest score for a single word!! We extend a friendly welcome to anyone interested in joining our sociable group. Please ring Rosemary on 01291 672276 for information about the dates for the next games

## Bridge

### No Fear Bridge

We all enjoy meeting in the lovely historic book lined room in Session House. Our bridge afternoons are extremely friendly and enjoyable, whilst constantly trying to improve the standard of our play!

**NB:** We are also motivated by the winning pair being able to choose their choice of chocolate bar at the end of the session!

The bridge groups will continue to meet every Monday and Wednesday at Sessions House Usk, from 1.45 - 4.00 pm. New members welcome!

## USK U3A Culture Meeting group

Meetings will be held in Llangibby Village Hall unless otherwise stated, and held on the last Friday of the month. Meetings have already been arranged for 29th September and 27th October, with the quiz in November and Christmas party on 30<sup>th</sup> November.

## Christmas Luncheon

□. □.Keep this date free □. □

CWRT BLEDDYN  
30th November 2017  
12.30 for 1.00pm

Details of Menu and costs will follow shortly

