

# USK u3a

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER

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## Celebrating the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of Usk u3a



Nearly forty members enjoyed a get together on Friday, 22 September, to mark the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Usk u3a. The event began with a glass of prosecco and sparkling elderflower juice when members toasted the organisation and its future. While enjoying their drinks, members were treated to a fascinating talk on 1000 years of Usk history by local speaker Barry Morse. Following this insight into our local town and its origins, tea, coffee and a selection of delicious cakes were served. Overall, a lovely afternoon in the good company of u3a members.

### Members' Quiz Friday, 27 October 2023 2pm at Llangybi Hall



Come along and participate in a fun afternoon answering questions with fellow members on a variety of subjects, such as nature, science, literature, music and entertainment. The questions are not overly difficult and there are some multiple choice answers as well as a picture quiz. While teams should have a maximum of six members there is no minimum number. We expect to make up some teams on the day so if you come alone everyone can join in the fun. You might win a prize!

## A huge thank you to Myra France our longest serving convenor of the Walking Interest Group



Myra began walking around Usk with friends in 2005. This was before Usk u3a came into being or became a formal part of the national organisation. Then very quickly Myra, a natural choice, became the convenor of the Walking Interest Group. Since that time she has organised hundreds of fantastic walks around our beautiful countryside for members. These walks have always been varied, interesting and well-researched and organised. Committed to the health and safety of members, Myra checks the walks beforehand and ensures members are safe and enjoy the activity. The Walking Interest Group is very popular with often over twenty members relishing a challenge come rain or shine! Walking in all weathers, Myra's leadership and friendly manner have ensured that members get the most out of the activity and always feel welcomed and part of the group.

While we understand why Myra feels it is the right time for her to step down from her convenor role, we want to let her know how much we shall miss her as an important part of our organisation. Myra has been and we are sure will continue to be a staunch supporter of Usk u3a. Both the Committee and members are hugely grateful. But, we are glad to know that Myra is not hanging up her walking boots (or incredibly heavy rucksack!) and plans to continue walking with the group. We wish her all the very best in the future and we hope she enjoys lots more walks.

Thank you to Keith Renshaw who has agreed to take over as convenor of the Wednesday Walking Interest Group. We hope we shall have details about a convenor for the Monday Walking Interest Group soon.

## We are searching for musical members to start a new Interest Group

Would anyone like to help start a new Music Interest Group? Mike Faraday, our u3a Network Liaison member, is suggesting a monthly daytime meeting listening to and discussing music of all genres, including classical, jazz, rock, opera, folk music etc. The group could focus on different composers, different countries, different instruments... the possibilities are endless!

Mike thinks the meetings could be used to listen to and exchange opinions and examples of different styles and may help to broaden your musical horizons. If you are interested in helping form such a group, please contact Mike to develop ideas further and work out the practical side of such meetings. Mike's contact details are: [dmfaraday@aol.com](mailto:dmfaraday@aol.com)

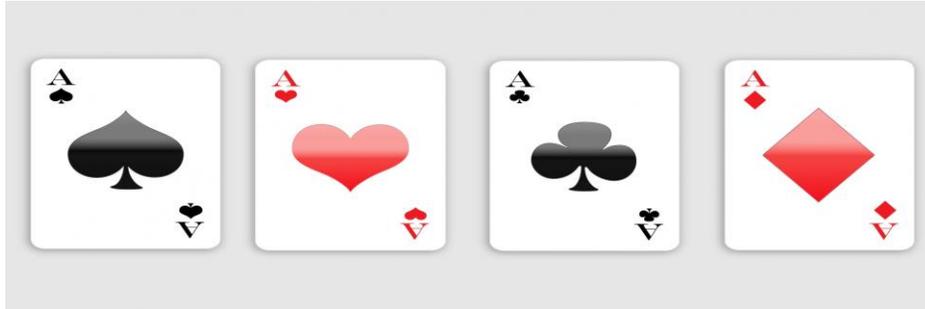


## An interview with Lee Blanning the Bridge Group Convenor

Lee started playing bridge back in the 1990's in Bristol. He was fortunate to have a great teacher who was always on hand to give advice during Bridge sessions. Thanks to this teacher Lee's interest in Bridge was nurtured and he played for many years.

When Lee moved to South Wales in 2009 he looked around for a Bridge Group to join, but the groups he found were not particularly friendly and insisted he had a Bridge partner. As a result of this he gave up playing Bridge for about 15 years. Instead he took up raising puppy guide dogs for the blind. His goal was to raise 10 puppies. When he had achieved this it was time to look for a Bridge group again. He happened to see the u3a article in an issue of The Usk and Raglan Diary and so he went along to the Sessions House one Monday afternoon in September 2022 and joined the group. He found the group friendly and welcoming and there was no insistence on him having a partner.

In March this year, Lee took on the role Convenor. He is fitting very well into the role and enjoys it a great deal. Lee feels he has brought to the group what he learned from his encouraging teacher. Advice is always at hand if anyone wishes and hands are discussed at the end of the session. As someone who didn't have a partner to bring to the group, he makes sure it works if there is an odd number of players by stepping back and playing a hand occasionally.



Lee feels the group is going well and he is working hard to make it interesting. This year the group had an Easter event with Easter egg prizes. Another session was devoted to raising money for Age UK and Alzheimer's Research. The group also celebrated the Usk u3a anniversary in style enjoying butterfly cupcakes and prizes of wine and cheese. Future plans include a collaboration with Monmouth u3a Bridge Group, where the group will take a trip to play with members of Monmouth u3a.

## Early notice of our Christmas lunch

Following some extensive research and visits to venues for our Christmas lunch, we are pleased to announce that the Cwrt Bleddyn Hotel again provides us with the best value. So, put **Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November** in your diary and look out for more details about how to book.

## A very happy 95<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration for one of our Bridge members

There was a good turnout at the Bridge Interest Group on Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> October. Sixteen members of the group met together to celebrate Sheila Maunder's 95th birthday. They had a great afternoon of bridge with special prizes donated by Sheila, for first and second place pairings.



Roger Millett presented Sheila with a beautiful bouquet of flowers and a card signed by her many bridge friends. In true style, Sheila won a second place prize of chocolates, which she said she will take home and give straight to her grandson!

## Thoughts on being a member of the Gardening Interest Group



Kath Beale joined the Gardening Interest Group about a year ago and has found everyone to be very friendly and inclusive. She particularly liked the opportunity to go on visits to some

exceptional gardens which she would otherwise not have been aware of. As a result of these visits Kath has bought some different plants. She believes there is always room in your garden for one more! Kath enjoys the Gardening monthly meetings on varied gardening topics with interesting speakers.

Kath feels an added bonus to being a member in this group are the occasional plant swaps. So, no regrets about joining from this enthusiastic member, long may it last.

## We desperately need you to join the Usk u3a Committee



In each newsletter and at our meetings we have tried to attract new Committee members to help the organisation continue to thrive and grow. But now we are making a plea so that we can survive! After recently celebrating fifteen years as an organisation we want to be able to see it continue in the years to come. However, as a very small Committee, this may not be possible.

We are really grateful to those members who have come forward to help with meetings, like arriving early to set out the tables and chairs and washing up after meetings. But, now we are asking for members to commit to more and join the Committee.

**PLEASE** consider this seriously if you want Usk u3a to survive. We are a small friendly group and would love you to join us. Contact Joan Clarke [jpiljoc@aol.com](mailto:jpiljoc@aol.com) 01633873211 or Wendy Young [wy@genesta.co.uk](mailto:wy@genesta.co.uk) 07592 032426 for information.