

TORFAEN u3a - NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2026

Hi everyone,

Our Torfaen u3a Open Day will take place on **Tuesday 20th October** at **Cwmbran Library** from **09:30-12:30**. We will have representatives from our interest groups,



Torfaen u3a
Make the most of life

OPEN DAY
at
Cwmbran Library
Tuesday
20th October 2026
10 am to midday

Learn : Laugh : Live

u3a

Together New Skills Having Fun
Adventure Travel Health & Well-being
Enjoyment Friendship
Keeping Fit Creativity
Cake Giving Back

Come and Join Us

Who is u3a for?
u3a is an organisation for people no longer in full time employment, providing educational, creative and leisure opportunities in a friendly environment.

For more information:-
Torfaen.u3asite.uk

BRIDGE GROUP



The Bridge Group will be running every Friday from October 2nd at Cwmavon Village Hall. This will be a structured course for beginners and rusty members requiring a refresher, tutors are available for advice and instruction.

COACH TOURS/ HOLIDAY GROUP



We recently had a trip to Chepstow using our Bus Passes, about 10 members took part and after a saunter around the Castle and the town we met up in The Bellhanger for refreshments and a meal. It was enjoyed by all and was a precursor to going around places in South Wales later this year and into the next year.

We also have thoughts on going to the Lake District and more on this to follow.

Our next meeting is at **The Crow's Nest, Cwmbran** on **Monday 12th October** at **10:30 am** Alex

CRAFT NEWS

At present the group have been working on a knitting project which will be revealed shortly.

The photos below show some different items including gold work, free motion appliqué and a wall hanging made using an embroidery machine. They were made at home by one of our members.

We continue to meet on Tuesdays at 12.30. in St Mary's Church Hall, Croesyceiliog.

Best wishes, **Rose.**



FOCUS GROUP

It was back to normal arrangements for our September meeting at Glaslyn Court when our starter theme for discussion was "Change". Unsurprisingly the conversation centred around the historical, with memories providing a rich source of "fings ain't what they used to be" comment. True to form the discussion ranged from the expected town/city centre change and decay with local hardware shops (where one might buy four candles or even a fork handle) to, bizarrely, shoe heel segs (still available on eBay).

The conversation will be continued at our next meeting which will be at 11.00am on Monday the 5th October.

Lyn.

LUNCH CLUB

A good turnout at our Lunch at The Greenhouse, where we all had 40% off our meals due to some of us having vouchers. Lovely to see everybody enjoying themselves.

The next Lunch will be on Friday 16th October at The Wain y Clare, Usk Road, Pontypool at 1p.m. All welcome.

Best wishes, **Ann**



The first quiz at our new venue, The Upper Cock, will take place this Friday 2nd October at 2:00pm.

I will now take names and signatures as you enter the venue, the door to the room we have is to the left as you enter the pub through the main entrance. Hope to see you all on Friday.

Helen

GARDENING GROUP



This month our group began with discussing the extreme weather we have had, and how it affected plants in different ways throughout the summer. Some plants had done surprisingly well in the excessive heat and sun, whilst others which we thought had died, are now beginning to show signs of growth, helped by some very welcome rain. Hydrangeas, in particular, have not fared well.

Now is a good time for planting some spring bulbs, such as daffodils. Snowdrops are best planted green in the spring, whilst tulips are best later on in the autumn. Nantyberry Nursery was named as being both reasonably priced for bulbs and the staff are helpful, too.

We were all wondering who would be the most likely candidate to take over from Monty Don, when he retires from Gardeners' World!!

Our meeting concluded with a very entertaining gardening quiz, thoroughly enjoyed by us all.

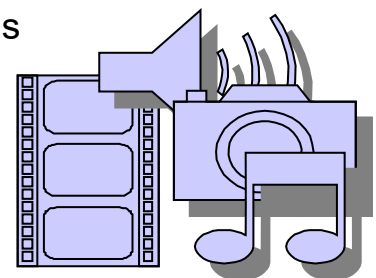
*Thank you **Marion and David**.*

Our next Gardening Group meeting is on Tuesday 27th Oct at Llanyravon Methodist Church at 2pm.

LISTENING TO MUSIC

As you might expect Dolly Parton was remembered this month and 'blasts from the past' included Petula Clarke.

We listened to highlights from the Proms, an extract from Bill Bailey's Remarkable Guide to the Orchestra, were reminded of Goldie Lookin' Chain – "Fresh Prince of Cwmbran", and watched Music Legends morph into the present day courtesy of Ol' Blue Radio.



There was comic relief by way of Patricia Routledge and "Trumpy Doodle", the Marsh Family version of "Yankee Doodle" for the USA's 250th anniversary, "Vaughan-Williams English Folk Songs Suite, Pachelbel's Canon in D Major and "September - Hunting" from Tchaikovsky's "The Seasons" reminded us of old favourites.

Pieces of music old and new are interspersed with interesting facts and every Tuesday in one hour from 11 am to 12 noon on Zoom we try to find something for everyone. Do feel free to just drop in and listen. Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83882138264?pwd=VsBxP1HYxZCHZvL3jaX3bfbvsW8yoV.1>

HISTORY

In our September meeting we were given an excellent talk by Dr Toby Jones on the Newport Medieval Ship, which was discovered during the building of the Riverfront Arts Centre in June 2002. Dr. Jones is the official curator and has been involved in the restoration of the ship since the beginning.



Model of the 15th century Newport Ship

Found on the banks of the river Usk, the ship remains suffered some damage from the construction work undertaken to build the Arts Centre, but still represents a substantial find of a late medieval ship, together with significant artifacts and environmental materials.

The ship was originally around 35 metres long and 161 tons burden, that being the number of tons of Bordeaux wine stored in its hold. A ship of this nature was used for long distances of trade between Britain, Biscay, and the Southern Iberia coast. Many of the artifacts found on board such as coins, pottery and plants suggest it was trading with Portugal in the 1450 /1460s.

The most likely date of its construction was the winter of 1457/ 58; this was determined by measuring annual growth rings in the wood. It was thought that the ship had been berthed for repair at Newport, but supports on the starboards may have given away. All of the timbers on the ship were raised and transferred to an Industrial Estate in Maesglas where they were immersed in tanks to be cleaned.

Local people have supported the restoration of the ship, leading to the formation of a group known as The Friends of the Newport Ship. The

preservation cost at the first stage of restoration was about £3 to 5 million and this was funded by the Welsh Assembly and Newport City Council.

It had been hoped to display the ship in the basement of the new Arts Centre but, due to its size, this was not feasible. It is hoped that a large site will become available in Newport with further financial assistance to show it in its original state.

Dr. Jones is very committed to accomplish his mission as it would no doubt be a valuable asset for Newport City to display the fully renovated ship in its full glory and raise revenue as a tourist attraction.

Our next meeting will be at 2pm on Thursday the 1st of October at Llanyravon Methodist Church, when I have arranged for some of our members to bring and give a short talk about items which are valued by them. My thanks to all of you that have offered to do this.

I am providing tea coffee and homemade cakes to add to what I hope will be an enjoyable afternoon. The charge this week will be 3 pounds, a pound more than the usual hire of the hall.

*Look forward to seeing you. Kind regards **Merle***

PHILOSOPHY



At our meeting on September 7th we discussed “Existentialism” through the works of Soren Kierkegaard, best known for emphasising the importance of personal choice, authenticity and commitment.

Further discussions centred around the existential philosophies of Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus.



Next month's meeting will be at 2 pm on Tuesday October 6th in Cwmbran Library when we will be discussing the topic of Civil Disobedience through the lens of David Henry Thoreau who popularised the term in his 1849 essay which argued that conscience outweighs unjust laws.

The impact of civil disobedience on society will be examined through the lives of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandella.



All are welcome to come along and join in the discussion.

Dori

READING STORIES

Ghosts cropped up quite often this month, and the macabre was a thread running through most Monday afternoons with a Widow's Quilt, a body buried under the floor boards, and a re-imagining of Little Red Riding Hood amongst other stories to keep you awake at night.

We continued to visit Japan and the South Wales, explored the relationship between George Elliot and Jane Austen and began an examination of the lives of women in Newport.

Please feel free to join us on any Monday; it doesn't have to be a regular commitment and we are happy to welcome members who prefer just to listen.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89712354545?pwd=5ZDHbawvYu95crjKZn5XryoeKlNLcJ.1>

POETRY GROUP

The first poem presented at the September meeting of the Poetry Group was "Ithaka"/ Ithaca, a 1911 poem by Greek poet Constantine P. Cavafy that is commonly considered his most popular work. "Ithaca" loosely follows the journey of Odysseus in Homer's Odyssey. The poem describes Odysseus's journey home after the end of the Trojan War.

Cavafy describes Odysseus seeing amazing things, without clearly caring for the destination, as he is advised: "don't hurry your trip in any way". According to the poem, experiences gained along the way will prepare its subject for the final destination: "As wise as you will have become, with so much experience, / you will understand, by then, these Ithacas and what they mean."

The poem was read by Maurice Tempelsman at Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis's funeral on May 23, 1994.

Our second poem "Waiting for the Barbarian" was written by Cavafy in November 1898 and printed around December 1904, as a private pamphlet. This poem describes a city-state in decline, whose population and legislators are waiting for the arrival of the "barbarians". When night falls, the barbarians have not arrived.



In contrast we looked at poems by Liz Lochhead. Born in 1947, Lochhead is a Scottish poet, playwright, translator and broadcaster. Between 2011 and 2016 she was the Makar, or National Poet of Scotland, and served as Poet Laureate for Glasgow between 2005 and 2011. Lochhead is also well known as a feminist, both from her writing and public appearances, she has said in the past, 'feminism is like the

hoovering, you just have to keep doing it.

We looked at three poems: Molly Pin Li McLaren, Trouble is not my Middle Name and My Rival's House. These poems are alive with vigorous speech idioms which give a unique insight into the thoughts of children, mothers and wives.

Thanks to Kim and Christine for their presentations.

We meet on the fourth Thursday of each month at 2 pm at Llanyravon Methodist Church. If you have an interest in poetry, why not come along and join us. You would be most welcome.

Chris Andrews

THEATRE & EVENTS GROUP

We welcomed back a large turnout and two new potential members. Items discussed were . . .

DYFFRYN GARDENS

Feedback from our trip to Dyffryn Gardens was positive, with members acknowledging that the heat made things difficult for everything but was beyond our control. As well as seeing the costumes from The Other Bennett Sister, members enjoyed the opportunity to see some of the rooms inside Dyffryn House.

TRIP TO INSOLE COURT & LLANDAFF CATHEDRAL

Insole Court contacted us to say that they would be closed for a conference on our preferred day, so we have agreed to visit on Wednesday, the **4th November**.

We will meet at the **Oasis car park, Edlogan Way at 10.45 for departure at 11.00**. On the day we will be two groups of 12. One group will take the tour at 12.00 and then have lunch in their cafe, with the second group having lunch first and then a tour at 1.00.

I have not yet heard from Llandaff Cathedral, so cannot give those arrangements. An email will be sent when I know more. I have received 24 names for the trip which is the maximum I can accept. I am accepting names for a reserve list but I cannot confirm a place.

PANTOMIME

We considered the productions at Cardiff, Newport and Cwmbran, and decided to support Peter Pan at our local Congress Theatre. Matinees are available at 1.00pm on the following weekends in December; 12/13, 19/20, 28/28. Ticket cost £16.00. If you are interested please bring money to our next meeting.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

We will again, have our Christmas lunch at the **Crows Nest at 12.00 on the 16th December**. The Christmas menu can be found on their website. Please give your choices to Lyn Sherburn along with your £5.00 deposit by our next meeting in October.

VUE CINEMA EVENTS

All on a Sunday at 2.00pm

National Theatre Live

27 September- Moliere's comedy, The Misanthrope. £19.99

25 October - Noel Coward's, Fallen Angels £17.49

22 November - John Lithgow as Roald Dahl in Giant £19.99

Musical

18 October - Hometown £17.49

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. A new film of Jane Austen's, "Sense and Sensibility" is at the Vue Cinema on the 25 September

2. Cwmbran Support Group in aid of St David's Hospice Care meets for a cuppa, cake and chat at the library on the second Tuesday of the month. £5 donation to include a raffle.

3. Cwmbran Support Group in aid of St David's Hospice Care are holding a Chinese Auction on Thursday 22 October at 7.00pm in Croesyceiliog Cricket Club. Tickets £10.00 to inc a light buffet. Contact Jayne on 07837058494 for tickets.

4. Lower New Inn hold an over 65s lunch on Wednesdays. 2 courses £7.00, 3 courses £10.00

5. The coffee Bar at Woodland Road Social Centre has reopened following a refurbishment.

NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting is at 11.00 on Wednesday, 21 October at the Crow's Nest, Llanyravon, followed by lunch if wanted. We look forward to seeing you.

Christine

WHIST



Looking forward to welcoming everyone back to Whist on Thursday 15 October 2 - 4pm at Margaret's home.

WALKING GROUP

3 September August 2026 – Garn Lakes and the Coity

On a humid and cloudy day, four of us started this walk from the Blaenavon Heritage Centre in Blaenavon, taking a steep path up steps to join the walking/cycle track north. We passed alongside the route of the former railway before reaching the Pontypool-Blaenavon Railway Halt, now a café but also the centre of the Blaenavon Heritage Railway where volunteers restore old railing stock and provide steam train trips on Bank Holidays. We then continued in a circuit around both Garn Lakes, once former coal tips but now very popular leisure and recreation, and a nature conservation area too. We then walked south along a track alongside the Coity with good views across the valley to Garn-yr-Erw before reaching Big Pit, part of the Museum and Galleries of Wales, and a very popular destination for families to see the workings of a former pit. We stopped at Big Pit for refreshments before returning via Forge side in Blaenavon to our starting point.

17 September August 2026 – Cwmbran Boating Lake

With many of the walking group on holidays this week, on a sunny but cooler day, four of us set off from Woodland Road, and took the footpath southwards alongside the Afon Lwyd, through the playing fields to reach the Boating Lake, as usual a very well-used family location.

We then walked around the Boating Lake before stopping for coffee and to watch the wildlife on the Lake, before returning northwards again alongside the Afon Lwyd but this time on the west bank to reach our start point.

Our October walks are:

1st October – Goetre Hall Wood and Llanover

15th October – Clytha to Bettws Newydd

For each walk, we meet at Woodland Road Sports and Social Club Car Park, leaving there at 1000: details of each walk are on the Torfaen U3A website. We look forward to meeting you on one of these walks!

Jeff and Jane Phillips

PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER 2026

Any errors or omissions please let me know. *If in doubt please check with your convenor.*

DAY	DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
Thursday	1 st		Walking Group	Goetre Hall Wood and Llanover
Thursday	1 st	2.00	History	Llanrhyon Methodist Church
Friday	2 nd	11.30	Bridge	Cwmavon Village Hall
Friday	2 nd	2.00	Quiz	The Upper Cock
Monday	5 th	11.00	Focus	Glaslyn Court
Monday	5 th	2.00	Reading Stories	Zoom
Tuesday	6 th	11.00	Listening to Music	Zoom
Tuesday	6 th	12.30	Craft	St Mary's Church Hall
Tuesday	6 th	2.00	Philosophy	Cwmbran Library
Friday	9 th	11.30	Bridge Group	Cwmavon Village Hall
Monday	12 th	10.30	Coach Tours/ Holiday Group -	Crow's Nest
Monday	12 th	2.00	Short Stories	Zoom
Tuesday	13 th	11.00	Listening to Music	Zoom
Tuesday	13 th	12.30	Craft	St Mary's Church Hall
Wednesday	14 th		Scrabble	Ruth's home
Thursday	15 th		Walking Group	Clytha to Bettws Newydd
Friday	16 th	11.30	Bridge Group	Cwmavon Village Hall
Friday	16 th	1.00	Lunch Club	The Wain y Clare
Monday	19 th	2.00	Short Stories	Zoom
Tuesday	20 th	10.00	Open Day	Cwmbran Library
Tuesday	20 th	11.00	Listening to Music	Zoom
Tuesday	20 th	12.30	Craft	St Mary's Church Hall

Wednesday	21 st	11.00	Theatre and Events Group	Crows Nest
Thursday	22 nd	2.00	Whist	Margaret's Home
Thursday	22 nd		Walking Group	Porthkerry
Friday	23 rd	11.30	Bridge Group	Cwmavon Village Hall
Monday	26 th	2.00	Short Stories	Zoom
Tuesday	27 th	11.00	Listening to Music	Zoom
Tuesday	27 th	12.30	Craft	St Mary's Church Hall
Tuesday	27 th	2.00	Gardening	Llanyravon Methodist Church
Thursday	29 th	2.00	Poetry	Llanyravon Methodist Church
Friday	30 th	10.30	Monthly Meeting	Llanyravon Methodist Church
Friday	30 th	11.30	Bridge Group	Cwmavon Village Hall