

NEWPORT u3a NEWSLETTER - JULY 2026

July's magic lies not in the warmth but in the memories we create.

BUSY REHEARSAL

Newport u3a's Choir sings an eclectic range of songs in four-part harmony and is available to perform at social and charitable events. But not ones to rest on our laurels, at the last rehearsal of this term, we invited Carol Williams (a retired music teacher and conductor of Cwmbran Baroque Singers)



along to give us some extra tuition. After taking us through some fun warm-up exercises and some scales to improve diction, we then sang some songs from our repertoire for which she highlighted how to enjoy getting across the feeling of the music to improve connections with the audience.

Also at that session was a representative from Newport City Council who filmed a video of us singing - to be included in a promotion for all local Age-Friendly organisations. So we can now be seen on NCC's Facebook and on YouTube!

HISTORICAL NEWT

A day trip was arranged for our members by the History Group to The Newt in Somerset. It is a working country estate with acres of farmland, woodland, orchards and gardens. It has a state-of-the-art museum where we viewed the foundations of a Roman Villa dating from AD351 and examined many artefacts unearthed on the site. The Interactive displays brought Roman-Britain to life. A full scale reconstruction 'Villa Ventorum' gave us an insight into the daily life from the authentically staged rooms, staff dressed in period costumes and the intricate mosaics, frescoes and garden schemes.



BONJOUR HONFLEUR!

50 of our members went on a coach holiday to Normandy to experience its history, beauty, cuisine and architecture. We spent the first morning relaxing in the pretty town of Honfleur, full of cobbled streets lined with half-timbered buildings and notable churches including the largest in France. We strolled around the public gardens and lively port where fresh seafood was on offer in the waterfront cafes. Later we took a scenic boat trip under the Normandy Bridge with its graceful silhouette that towers over the Seine estuary, and then into the commercial port with its busy quays.



We had a full day guided tour of the Normandy beaches and memorial sites and also the German Longues-sur-Mer battery with its original guns. The Arromanches-les-Bains D-Day Museum brought life to the history of the Landings and the construction of the Mulberry B artificial harbour. We also visited the landing site at Gold Beach where the rough sea and large waves were the exact conditions as the day of the Landing. We then continued to the Pegasus Bridge Memorial and Museum where the first liberators landed.

The next morning was free in Lisieux to climb the hill to visit the Basilica where there was a collective "WOW!" when we saw its beautiful dome. Afterwards we had a tour of the Calvados Christian Drouin distillery and saw the processes for making their ciders, perries and Calvados - we all enjoyed the tasting session which included local cheeses.

On our final day we visited Giverny to explore the beautiful garden of the artist Claude Monet, also his house and studio where he kept some of his paintings to record each step of his career. We strolled around the two parts of his garden; one focusing on perspective, symmetry and colourful flowers; the second its famous lily-strewn Water Garden with wooden bridges. We were very fortunate that the subject of many of his paintings, the various coloured water lillies, were all in full bloom.

MORE RECYCLING OPTIONS

Help reduce waste by recycling empty blister packs at a large pharnacy chain store in Commercial Street, Newport. So put on your 'walking shoes!' to reduce waste



MALCOLM BROADENS HIS HORIZONS

Our septegenarian member, Malcolm Keal, had never stepped foot outside of the UK in his life. As a member of Newport u3a for 16 years, he has been on most of our holidays and day trips but always declined the annual tours overseas.

In the true mutual support ethos of the u3a - Jackie Kerr, Convenor of our Holidays and Events Group; Julie Kennedy, our then Chair Person; and member Chris Day helped Malcolm apply for his passport and made it possible for him to join us on the trip to Normandy.

He enjoyed visiting all the famous sites such as Honfleur, Monet's Garden and the WWII memorials and museums of the Normandy beaches, but it was the least known Basilique Sainte Terese at Lisieux that he found really memorable. Built in the early 20th century, the Romanesque-Byzantine-Style building with an imposing 95 meter high dome impressed him with its grandeur and the three naves adorned with colourful mosaics.



SKITTLERS BOULED OVER

During the Summer recess our Skittles Group continued to meet at the St Julian Inn. During the fine weather we enjoyed a leisurely afternoon playing French Boules in the pub's attractive riverside garden.

Les Escargots (snails) were slow to get going but they soon overtook Les Grenouilles (frogs) to win the game. You could say that they were hopping mad! Afterwards some of us relaxed on the sun deck and listened to the music wafting out from the live Jazz band whilst enjoying the beautiful scenery.



Contact Angela at publicity.newportu3a@gmail.com if you have any news about your group or photographs to be included in a future Newsletter.

