# NEWPORT u3a NEWSLETTER -OCTOBER 2026

October shows us that change can be beautiful.

**NORFOLK HOLIDAY**



A Big Thank You to Jackie Kerr and Pat Fackerell's Holiday Group for arranging dozens of amazing holidays over the last decade and more. They certainly pulled out all the stops on their final holiday, even arranging some perfect weather when we went on a 5 day bespoke coach holiday to Norfolk. On our first day we visited the iconic royal retreat of the Sandringham Estate which surprised us all with its homely and informal atmosphere. We were allowed to visit the rooms that King Charles and Queen Camilla use when at Sandringham, including an intimate area overlooking the gardens where a small table is laid for the couple to eat their meals. We walked through the wonderful gardens and talked with the gardeners about their plans for changing certain areas. Before we left we visited the church to which the Royal Family walk at Christmas and are photographed on the steps. (We found it quite a distance.) Later we travelled to Hunstanton, a beautiful seaside resort, with its famous striped cliffs of white and red chalk and brown carrstone.

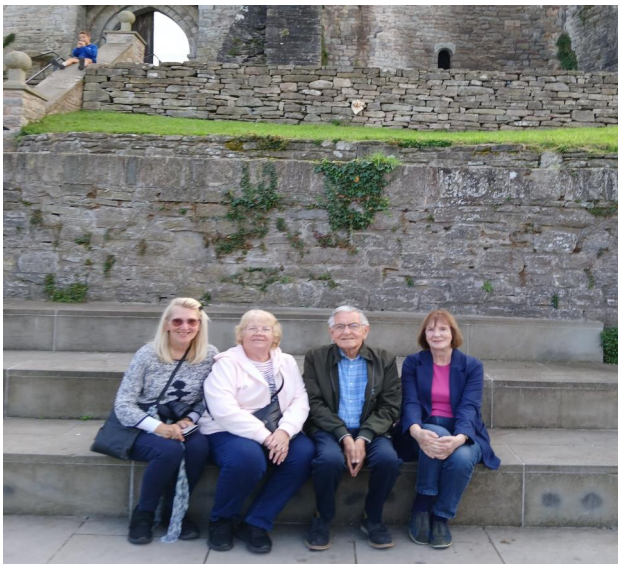
The next morning was spent at Flag Fen; a Bronze Age site in Peterborough which was constructed 3,500 years ago and only discovered in 1982. Archaeological work is ongoing, though the site has a visitor centre, a small museum of artefacts, a reconstruction of two Bronze Age roundhouses and, quite amazingly, a 'wet room' containing the preserved timbers of a causeway built between 1365 and 967 BC which linked the land to a small island of religious significance. The afternoon was spent in Peterborough where some took the opportunity to shop but most visited the cathedral where Catherine of Aragon, the first wife of Henry VIII, is buried. However the highlight was seeing the Mary Queen of Scot's Exhibition. We learnt about her whole tragic story, and that following her execution and burial in the cathedral, her son James I had her remains moved to Westminster Abbey. We enjoyed seeing the extensive collection of artefacts and costumes.

Day 3 was for many the highlight of the week; a safari tour of Wagatunga Wildlife Reserve. 170 acres of woodland, grassland and lakes which focuses on the conservation and breeding of endangered species of deer, antelope and rare birds, and all free to roam. We travelled on buggies or safari trailers and the guides were so helpful, passionate and knowledgeable and ensured that we saw all the various animals - it was a magical experience. In the afternoon we relaxed at Boal Quay in Kings Lynn, enjoying a walk along the River Ouse lined with historic buildings and fishing boats.

About to board the coach to return home, we encountered Robbie Savage (ex Welsh footballer and manager) who was here to sign up as the new manager of Peterborough UFC. He spent time talking to us and kindly agreed to join us for our group photo - he's the tallest (youngest) man at the back - surrounded by females!

**MAKING HAY . . .**

Many of our members went on a day trip to the market town of Hay-on-Wye organised by our History Group. We had a tour of its castle which was originally constructed as part of the Norman Invasion of Wales defence. After a turbulent history, being attacked and burnt several times, a 17th century Jacobean mansion house was built alongside the medieval Keep. The recent restoration has created a centre for the arts, literature and learning with a restaurant and a museum.



Hay-on-Wye felt slightly detached from the modern world. Straddling the Welsh/English border, its compact town centre was easy to explore on foot. It is more famous for its Literary Festival and the many bookshops which have dwindled from 50 to 15. In addition, we browsed in some excellent specialist outlets that have taken their place such as retro homewares, boutique clothes, antiques and even chandeliers! - Hay-on-Wye has certainly diversified.

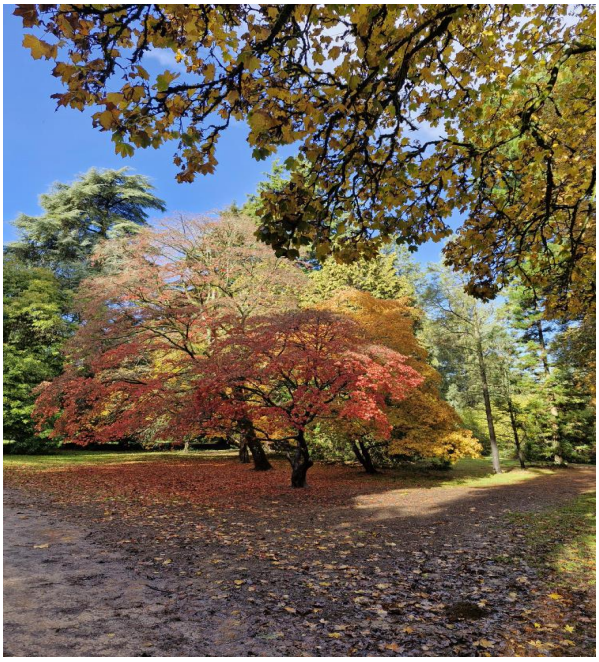


## ART GROUP



Anna Hughes, once a convenor of our popular long-running Art Group, and still a member, likes to continue sharing ideas with us. Recently we experimented with the medium of charcoal using 6 different techniques which included mark-making, stippling, contouring and cross-hatching. This led to a finished piece of work of an abstract picture of Venice at night. Anna finds our members very responsive and a delight to engage with.

## WESTONBIRT AND TETBURY



Many of us went on a day trip to Westonbirt Arboretum arranged by our Gardening & Wildlife Group. Managed by Forestry England, it is one of the most important tree collections in the world and Autumn is when it earns its fame. The collection of Japanese Maples put on a fantastic display of colour which made it so appealing to walk along the paths and kick our way through leaf-strewn, sunlit glades. We were delighted with the outstanding autumn colours that created explosions of fiery reds, purples, yellows and gold.

Afterwards we visited the nearby market town of Tetbury with over 1300 years of history at its centre where we admired the many fine stone buildings in various styles indicating the architectural fashions of the last 400 years - the cobbled 'Chipping Steps' flanked by 17th century weavers' cottages were so picturesque. It was an important town for the wool and yarn trade during the middle ages, but today is better associated with the boutique shops and some great food that we discovered.

*** FREE CAR PARKING 2/11-3/1 for 2 hours at seven of NCC's car parks, including Kingsway***

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