



COWBRIDGE
u3a
learn, laugh, live

MAY 2026

Dear members and friends

It seems to me that it isn't really spring until the first May bank holiday: the days are longer, the flowers are out and an abundance of green graces our parks and gardens. It certainly felt like spring on Monday this week at the Cowbridge May Fayre when, despite a somewhat dubious forecast, we enjoyed fine weather and even bright sunshine in the afternoon. There will be more about this event later in the bulletin but first, here is some news and reminders about forthcoming events.

General Meetings

At our last General Meeting, in April, attendance was a little below the numbers that we now regard as normal. There are a number of possible reasons for this but, in particular, coinciding with the Easter holidays might well have been a factor. It seems likely that family get-togethers, grandparent duties and 'away-breaks' might have contributed to a lower turnout. Nevertheless, there were 50 of us present and we enjoyed a fascinating presentation about the '*Conservation of Whales and Dolphins*' by Bernard Purrier. His undoubted expertise and enthusiasm for his subject was infectious and contributed to our enjoyment of the afternoon.

At the next General Meeting on 13th May (next week!) our guest speaker is Robert Pickard, Emeritus Professor of Neurobiology at the University of Cardiff and his subject is '*Wonderful Things About Bees*'. Robert is Patron of the Welsh Beekeepers Association, President of the Central Association of Beekeepers and Editor Emeritus of the *Journal of Apicultural Research*. He is an honorary member of many organisations concerned with beekeeping and public health. With such a distinguished speaker, we can look forward to an interesting and engaging talk. You won't want to miss it!

Looking a little further ahead, our general meeting in June will be a change to the programme published on our membership cards. Due to unavoidable circumstances, it became necessary to make new plans. The topic will now be '*Behind the Curtain*' and the speaker is Bridget Wallbank from Mid Wales Opera. I am told that this is a warm, enjoyable talk that provides an insight into the people, stories and artistry behind the work of this organisation. Mid Wales Opera is committed to making high-quality opera accessible to communities across Wales through touring, education and creative outreach. This should definitely be another one to put on the calendar.

Coffee in the 96 Degrees Coffee House

This is just another reminder that we will not be gathering at the 96 Degrees Coffee house on the last Monday of May because this will be a bank holiday. Our usual informal meetings resume next month on 29th June. Do come along, buy yourself a tea or coffee, perhaps a cake or snack and meet with friends, fellow members and some from the committee. You will be very welcome.

Cowbridge May Fayre

As many of you know, we had a very good time at the Cowbridge May Fayre on Monday this week. It was a very successful and popular event. We erected our splendid new gazebo on the field, alongside other voluntary organisations, and were able to welcome visitors and old friends and show them something about what we do. Our very visible presence at occasions like these helps demonstrate what we can offer the community. We attracted interest from new members, both potential ones and those who actually joined Cowbridge u3a on the day. Our raffle raised a good amount for us to donate to the Mayor's charity (the Motor Neurone Disease Society this year). Special thanks are due to the members of the committee who gave up their time, and also to those of you who visited and offered friendship and support. It was a great pleasure to see you there.

New Groups

It is particularly pleasing to be able to announce, this month, the formation of three new interest groups within Cowbridge u3a. We now have another reading group called 'Cover to Cover', a Family History group to delve into stories of ancestors and conduct research into our backgrounds and, last but by no means least, a Cycling Group. Further information is available on our website (<https://cowbridge.u3asite.uk>) but here is a brief summary:

- Cover to Cover: Coordinator – Patricia Hulse - Meeting on the first Wednesday each month (10.45 am to 12.15 pm) Venue – Cowbridge Library
- Family History: Coordinator – Betty Alden - Meeting monthly (first meeting on Monday 18th May) Venue – members' homes
- Cycling: Coordinator Michael Hulse - Meeting fortnightly on alternate Mondays (2nd and 4th Mondays – alternating with Monday Walks)

Meet & Greet

As you may have noticed, we are trying to improve our arrangements for meeting and greeting new members to help them feel more welcome in Cowbridge u3a. Members of the Meet & Greet team are easily recognisable at General Meetings by their red lanyards. We hope to expand this team and are, therefore looking for more volunteers. If you might be interested to join the Meet & Greet team, and would like to know more about how it works, please see our Vice-Chair, Elizabeth Eustace. Look out for the red lanyard!

Cowbridge u3a Annual General Meeting 2026

Here is another date for your diary – in this case, a very important one. Our Annual General Meeting for 2026 will take place on Wednesday, 9th September at 2.00 pm in the Main Hall of Cowbridge Town Hall. As well as the usual (hopefully brief) annual reports, we will also be electing the principal officers and members of the committee of Cowbridge u3a. It is essential that we have a quorum of members (20%) which, at present, means a minimum of 60. So, may I ask you to make every effort to be there. It will be much more than just a tedious business meeting. We try to keep the business short and then have some entertainment and refreshments which should include a glass of decent wine (or non-alcoholic alternative). Please make a note of the date and do come.

New u3a Learning Activity

We have been asked by the Welsh u3a representatives, Nicky Lee and Colin Luker, to share the following message (from Susannah Hodge: Head of Learning and Volunteering) with you.

*We'd love to encourage u3a members across Wales to get involved in the new u3a learning activity, **Missing Pieces**, exploring the stories behind listed buildings that matter to them. Whether through memories, photographs, artwork or research, contributions will help*

*capture the social and community history of places across the UK. As part of this, members may be interested in the upcoming online talk. **The Peoples's Collection Wales; Exploring the public archive of Welsh history** (Thursday 28 May 2026, 2.00-3.30pm) which highlights how communities, heritage bodies and individuals collect, catalogue and celebrate their history for others to discover.*

More details about the **Missing Pieces** activity are available on the u3a website: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/learning/learning-activities/missing-pieces> and the link to book the online talk is: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/educational-events>

Admitting children to u3a events

Recently, following a request from a potential visitor, the committee has looked into the question of whether we should allow children to attend Cowbridge u3a events. We have consulted guidance from u3a head office and asked neighbouring u3as in the South Wales region how they deal with such queries. As a consequence, and, in part, because of considerations about insurance cover, the committee has decided that Cowbridge u3a is unable to allow children below the age of 18 to attend any meeting of Cowbridge u3a and its constituent interest groups. Committee members would be grateful for the assistance of members in carrying out this policy.

Diary Dates

Here is a brief summary of the dates of forthcoming events for your diary:

- Wednesday, 13th May, 2.00pm General Meeting: '**Wonderful Things About Bees**' (Robert Pickard)
- Monday, 29th May, **NO** meeting for coffee in the 96 Degrees Coffee House (bank holiday)
- Wednesday, 10th June, 2.00 pm General Meeting: '**Behind the Curtain**' Bridget Wallbank)
- Monday, 29th June, 11.00 am: Coffee in the 96 Degrees Coffee House.

I think that is all the news I have for you at present. I am afraid that I have failed, quite abysmally this month, to confine my ramblings to a single, two-sided sheet of A4. If you do need to print it out, I am afraid that it will use up two sheets of your printer paper. Sorry about that. In the meantime, however, may I take this opportunity to wish you health and happiness, and pleasure in the spring weather.

Best wishes,

Peter

(Peter Carter: Chair, Cowbridge u3a)