

# Monmouth u3a Bulletin

## February 2021

### **Member's Meeting - Tuesday 16 February 2021 at 2.30pm**

Professor Gareth Williams: *From Jenner to Wakefield: The long shadow of the Anti-Vaccination movement*

In 1998 a medical furore broke out when The Lancet published an article by Andrew Wakefield questioning the benefits of the MMR vaccination which was being given unquestioningly to children throughout the UK.

Coming 202 years after the first vaccination by Edward Jenner, which led to the eradication of smallpox throughout the world, this recent incident is only the latest in a long history of questioning the benefits of vaccination.

From early irrational fears born of outdated medical understanding through to the latest medical research and findings, Professor Williams traces the history of the anti-vaccination movement and its long tail, reviewing the social settings in which the fears were found and offering a balanced assessment of vaccination as we find it today.

For an invitation to the talk, which will be held on-line using Zoom, please e-mail Mike Saunders at [mikesaunders.mjs@gmail.com](mailto:mikesaunders.mjs@gmail.com)

### **Shared Learning Projects**

Are you interested in setting up an art or hobby exhibition? undertake a group study of local wildlife? architecture? history? shopping habits? use of local facilities?

Monmouth u3a members are invited to set up a Shared Learning Project; Groups work together for a short time – just a few months – and produce a report/exhibition/study.

Meetings can be via zoom initially and/or in person when Covid guidance allows. For more information see the Monmouth u3a website <https://www.monmouthu3a.com/> or <https://www.u3a.org.uk/resources/subjects/393-shared-learning-projects>

### **Third Age Trust newsletter**

The latest edition contains, among other things, information about a forthcoming on line talk by the National Army Museum on the British Army in Germany since 1945, the chance to join a talk by Chris Whitty, the Chief Medical Officer in England, on Vaccinations and online Bridge classes for all levels of experience. More information can be found here <https://mailchi.mp/u3a/your-u3a-national-newsletter-january>

### **Magazine – Advance notice**

Just a reminder to Convenors that articles will be needed in due course. Given this unusual year it might be worth beginning to think about how to report the activities of your group. We

would also be keen to include articles about what members have been up to when normal activities have been suspended.

### **Communications**

Would any member with website design experience be interested in helping with the website and facebook page? If so, please contact Simon Durrant via [monmmouthu3a@gmail.com](mailto:monmmouthu3a@gmail.com).

### **Monmouth u3a French Intermediate**

Monmouth u3a French Intermediate had a successful year, meeting through Zoom, during which we were delighted to welcome a new member and welcome back a previous one. This meant that the vacancies left by 2 of our members who recently emigrated to France were quickly filled. We were pleased to make a brief contact from France with those former members after having eagerly followed their property search experiences and to know that they are safe and well.

In our sessions we have progressed from translating a book of texts and correcting general conversations. During 2020 we concentrated on grammar and almost completed a total language study programme of 2,200 exercise questions. We have also studied a number of news articles, written our own narratives and are well into a book of French dialogues that enable us to take turns at different characters. This has been great fun. All these elements reflect the group's elected preferences and we are grateful to our tutor for accommodating them.

There is at present one vacancy for this group. Please contact the Convenor Marie Everett on 01600 750476 or e-mail [marie.e.everett@icloud.com](mailto:marie.e.everett@icloud.com) for further details.

### **Science and Technology meeting:** Tuesday February 9 at 2.30pm via Zoom

Artificial Intelligence - A presentation by Leigh Edwards.

There are 3 types of artificial intelligence: Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI), Artificial General Intelligence, and Artificial Super Intelligence. We have currently only achieved ANI, but as machine learning capabilities continue to evolve, and scientists get closer to realising General AI, theories and speculations regarding the future of AI abound. This presentation discusses the technologies that are behind these initiatives, what progress has been made to date, and asks what are the potential risks and benefits to the human race?

You do not need to be a member of the group to participate. To register for this meeting, please email [monmouthu3amembership@gmail.com](mailto:monmouthu3amembership@gmail.com).

For details of future meetings, please see the website.

### **Free on-line classes**

This is a reminder that Greysnet are running a programme of free on-line courses on a number of subjects including drawing, singing, writing and movement. We have had some good feedback from members about them. Although some of the classes have already started you

can join part way through and, in some cases, the first classes have been recorded so that you can catch up. Further details are available here <https://greysnet.com/2020/12/free-online-creative-classes-for-older-people/>

### **King Lear Prizes**

This is the national creative arts competition for older people during the COVID-19 pandemic. The latest round of the competition has just opened to entries, and is running from January to 19th March 2021. The competition is specifically for amateurs and beginners who are over the age of 65.

The competition accepts entries in poetry, real stories (short stories from people's lives), art and musical performance, and there are over £2,000 of prizes on offer. The winners will be picked by a panel of expert judges including Gyles Brandreth and Julian Lloyd Webber.

More information can be found at <https://www.kinglearprizes.org.uk>.

### **Climate Future Fest, the Festival that doesn't cost the Earth!**

#### **September 20-26<sup>th</sup> 2021**

A free-to-enter town based festival to raise awareness about the climate emergency and to help local residents make small changes to lower Monmouth's carbon footprint and be more environmentally aware.

This is a community led project (not connected with u3a) running mainly on good will. If you would like to get involved in the organisation please email Laura McCartney at [laura.acemonmouth@outlook.com](mailto:laura.acemonmouth@outlook.com)

More information is available on the ACEMonmouth Facebook page.

**Contributions for the March bulletin should be sent to Simon Durrant ([sncd@outlook.com](mailto:sncd@outlook.com)) by 25<sup>th</sup> of February.**