

Borderlines March 2013

The magazine of Llandrindod Wells and district U3A



Introduction from the Editor.

Hello and welcome to the March 2013 edition of Borderlines. I hope this month sees an improvement in the bitter temperatures we have been having., not least because as so many groups have no outings in the winter months, I was very short of material for this edition! I am deeply grateful to my contributors for responding so magnificently to my desperate pleas. Please keep it coming in – Borderlines is what you make it.

Chairman's report.

This issue of Borderlines will be distributed at the AGM, at the end of our 2012-2013 year. I would like to thank my fellow Committee members for all their hard work during the past year, as well as the Group coordinators and other members who have helped in many ways - you know who you are! Once again, our Membership has increased, so we must be doing something right! Having seen the Lecture Programme for 2013-2014 I'm sure we can look forward to another interesting and informative year.

On the subject of Lectures - one of the basics of U3A is "shared knowledge" whereby members with KNOWLEDGE of a particular subject SHARE it with their fellow members. This often happens in the context of the Interest Groups, but it could, and has been, in the Lecture Programme, too.

Perhaps you have knowledge or experience of a subject which you could pass on to your fellow members - our Programme Secretary always comes up with a good variety of topics to be presented by our visiting lecturers, but we enjoy seeing familiar faces, too. Please don't be too modest - Mai Ellis is the person to contact.

Or, maybe you have friends in high places and know someone who is well enough known to attract a large audience for a "Keynote Lecture" - we are planning to hold one again in 2014. Once again, Mai is the person to talk to.

Useful contact numbers.

As I am producing this before the election takes place, I do not know which officers will still be in post. In consequence, I am giving this month only the contact details for Barbara and myself, as we are not elected officials.

Barbara Warner- Web Editor (01597 825592) barbara@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk

Margaret Mason- Editor Of Borderlines (01597 825365)
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There will be full details of the new committee in the next Borderlines.

Cover photograph: Margaret Mason

Welcome

The following new members have recently joined us :-

January: Mrs Jillian Ames; Mr John Ames; Mrs Jenny Davies; Mrs Marilyn Jeffreys; Mr Huw Jeffreys; Mrs Sheila Simpson and Mr Vernon Watkins.

February: Mrs Pat Kelly and Mrs Geraldine Mussell.

We would like to welcome you to Llandrindod Wells and District U3A and hope you enjoy your time with us.

Stephanie Davies.

Stephanie Davies has asked me to pass on in Borderlines her thanks to U3A members for their support and good wishes after her recent heart operation.

NEW INTEREST GROUPS FOR 2013

Virtual Travel Group

(taking you anywhere you wish to go from the comfort of your armchair)

The venue is currently The Drama Centre, Tremont Road, and the next meeting will be on 10th April - Across Canada . (The dates may change each month to accommodate a Wednesday and a Thursday)

Time : 10.30 am to 12.30 pm

Classical Mythology

(particularly in relation to art and literature)

There will be More information available on this after the inaugural meeting on 28th February

French Conversation

(First Wednesday of each month from 10.30 am to 12.00 noon commencing 6th February 2013.)

Do not worry if you have missed the initial meetings - anyone is welcome to join in at any time.

Other suggestions for groups include **Tea Dances**, **History of the Western World** (to include some military history), **Spanish Conversation** and a **Local History** (Llandrindod and surrounding areas) group. If you are interested in any of these, or have any new ideas yourself, please add your name and contact details to the lists displayed on the notice board at each monthly meeting.

Should you require any further information about the above groups, please do not hesitate to contact me:-Denise Thorn Acting Interest Groups Co-ordinator 01597 824303

Houston, we have a problem!



Computer Group

Members of the computer group concentrate furiously as they tackle Powerpoint presentations. All the hard work paid off. Ann Morgan (Seen above, top right, apparently tearing her hair out) demonstrated her skills at the Welsh History Group in January with a Powerpoint presentation on Emigration.

Shown above: Ann Parkhouse; Norma Baird Murray; Vic Everill; Ann Morgan; Adele Bevan; Jane Malvern; Jacqui Simonds and Dave Barlow.

Pictures, Barbara Warner. Thanks to Vic Everill for the title. (I know it was a joke, Vic, but it was too apt not to share)



The Digital Photography Group was one of the first Interest Groups. At first we met in members' houses, but due to increased numbers, we now meet in the Conference Room of the Drama Centre in Tremont Road. One of the advantages of meeting is that we can use the U3A Laptop & Projector to display our work without the need for paper prints.

We usually meet there at 10 am on the 1st Monday of the month, although occasionally this has to be changed due to a clash with a Bank Holiday. We manage to pack a lot into our 2 hourly meetings which usually consist of :-

- a session when we display, admire and vote for the winner of the entries for the Photograph of the Month, which will be displayed on the Notice Board at the main U3A meeting the following Monday.

- a short period of instruction which usually covers one of a series of related topics

- a chance to look at our pictures relating to the topic of the previous month on the projector.

Our members' experience in photography is very varied, as are the types of digital cameras that we use. Our learning sessions are usually related to the operation of our cameras to best achieve the results we want. We also learn to edit our pictures on the computer.

We welcome new members of whatever ability and experience – ring Jane Malvern for more details (01597 823806) **Text Jane Malvern, Photo Michael Wilson**

Powys Befriending seeks 400 volunteers to “make a difference!”

A befriending project based in Powys has launched a campaign to recruit more than 400 volunteers to support people over the age of 50 years who are at risk of losing their independence due to illness, bereavement, disability or isolation.

Powys Befrienders is looking for volunteers who feel they can make a difference by giving a couple of hours a week to help someone in their community regain their confidence to become more independent and take control over their life.

Contact: Rachael Beech tel:01597 822191 or email Rachael.beech@pavo.org.uk.



The Readers Book

Group enjoying tea and cake at the house of member Dorothy Barry,

L-R Margaret Mason, Ian Paget, Martha Wooldridge, Dorothy Barry, Karyn Evans and Barbara Warner.

The next meeting will be at the Commodore on Tuesday 12th March at 2pm when the book will be *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguru, followed in April by *The Rape of the Fair Country* by Alexander Cordell. We would be pleased to see you there or contact Margaret or Barbara for further details.

We were discussing which books we would take to a desert island at our last meeting. I am grateful to Martha for letting me print her choice. What would be yours? Do you think we could select Llandrindod U3A's favourite books?

DESERT ISLAND BOOKS

- **Mansfield Park** by Jane Austen. Ideally I would have all 6 Austen works in one volume but if I can only have one novel, this is it. I identify with Fanny Price who is completely unlike me.
- **The Tartar Steppe** by Dino Buzatti. A young soldier is posted to a far-flung fortress to face an unknown enemy who does not appear until he has waited his whole life and is dying. Not cheerful but beautifully written.
- **Middlemarch** by George Eliot. This is England of the 1830s with a wonderful cast of characters realistically drawn. I can become completely immersed in this world.
- **The Leopard**. By Giuseppe di Lampedusa. The backdrop is the unification of Italy and the novel is an exquisite elegy for a passing civilization seen through the eyes of a sensual but scientific aristocrat.
- **To Kill a Mockingbird** by Harper Lee. This is a compulsive read, describing life in a segregated Southern town as an African-American is falsely accused of the rape of a poor white girl. The novel is made by its humour and witty descriptions of characters.
- **Im Westen Nichts Neues – All Quiet on the Western Front** by Eric Maria Remarque. I love First World War literature and this is my favourite novel. In German it takes me longer to read.
- **Anna Karenina** by Tolstoy. I haven't read this for a while but the last time I did I was convinced that it was the finest novel ever written and I expect to think so again.
- **Victorian England: Portrait of an Age** by G M Young. I have to have one history book and this dated but erudite essay will take me through changes in the Victorian mind, above all the casting down of religion by scientific inquiry and historical analysis.

Memories of tents

Alwyn Batley

Were you at the last U3A meeting when Vic and Ann told us of their experiences on their walk from John O Groats to Lands End.? Right in front of me was their tent, a lightweight thing with all the modern attachments scattered around. Seeing the tent sent shivers up my back. I never want to see a tent again. It's all right in the South of France but not here in the UK with Summer such as the one we have had. When my demob from the army was on the horizon I resolved never, ever, would I venture into a tent again. Big ones, small ones I would never go into a tent again. I had enough of putting on wet clothes. You can not find your socks, so you put on someone else's. Everything you put on was damp and then you would have to be in them all day long, drying out from the heat you yourself generated. Once in Germany I had to dig out some American tanks, Sherman I think. Six had driven across a peat bog and they sunk up to their gun turrets in the peat. We had to work four hours on shift and eight off. It rained and it rained and we got wet. Back to your tent for some rest and back to work again. I was absolved from this duty, but had to give a hand when the need arose. The peat stuck to the shovel and you had to get it off by carrying it a distance from the tank and knocking it off with your foot. To get those tanks out took nearly a month. We pulled some out of the bog using winches set up on lorries. The trucks had winches built in to them. Some distance from the tanks was a forest of trees. We cut them down and built platforms on which to place the lorries. We all had new denims and socks and anything else that needed to be replaced. The American army paid for it so we took advantage. I could not get my neck clean for some time afterwards. "Wash your neck" said my mother when I came home on leave. To no avail. My neck, my arms, and the rest of me that was exposed was brown. Along with the rest of my Squadron I looked more like a Indian or a Pakistani. My resolve to never enter a tent to sleep has been kept, and it is close to sixty years now.



U3A LLandrindod Meets BBC Wales

On 26 February a group of members from our U3A met with producers and staff from BBC Cymru Wales to give their views on several BBC programmes.

The meeting, held in the Metropole Hotel, consisted of 16 members from U3A and 7 staff from BBC Wales: Geriant, the Chair of *Wales Today*; Emma, the Producer of *Iolo's Great Welsh Parks*; Paul, the Producer of the *Louise Elliott Programme* on Radio Wales; Gwen, the Script Editor from *Pobl y Cwm*; Lowri, the Assistant Producer of *ffermio*; Brian, the Political Reporter from BBC Wales; and Llinos, the Producer/Production Manager of *'The Story of Wales'*. The purpose of the exercise was for BBC staff, as part of their training, to be exposed to differing viewpoints from viewers and to widen their contacts which may help them develop items or programme ideas that would be featured on BBC services in future.

Whilst there was unanimous praise for 'Iolo's Great Welsh Parks', there were a number of different views expressed about the other programmes. The Welsh 'soap' *Pobl y Cwm* is shown in 20 minute episodes 5 days a week, 52 weeks a year with a weekly omnibus. It is in Welsh with English sub-titles and has been running successfully since 1974. The *Louise Elliott Programme* is a light chat and music programme, broadcast on Radio Wales every afternoon between 1.00 and 4.00 p.m. Opinion was very divided particularly on this radio programme.

It was interesting to hear the background to the making of these programmes, what the producers are trying to achieve and at which age groups and audiences they are aiming. We appreciated the opportunity to ask questions as well as to give our views and enjoyed a stimulating and interesting session.

Maybe we should start a Radio and TV Interest Group.....!

Text and pictures by Barbara Warner

