



Borderlines

December 2014

The magazine of Llandrindod and District U3A



Introduction from the Editor.

Hello and welcome to the December edition of Borderlines. My thanks to the contributors for their articles, which show how much is going on in the U3A . For all those who have yet to try an interest group, may I urge you to do so. As you can see, we have so much fun! Martha has news of new Interest Groups beginning - if anyone else fancies starting a group she would be delighted to hear from you.

A very Merry Christmas to you all,

Margaret

Chairman's message from Bob Atkins.

One of the privileges of being your Chairman is that I have the pleasure of welcoming new members to our organisation. Of course we were all 'new' members at some stage when through maybe the encouragement of other like minded friends etc we made the important decision to join.

It is well known that we are own best kept secret!

In the coming months we will be invited to share in initiatives from both our regional and national U3A Networks to spread the word and to encourage growth in our organisation.

Watch this space and future editions of U3A Matters to see how we might be involved!

As this is the last edition of Borderlines of the year, may I take this opportunity to wish and your families a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Welcome

We would like to welcome the following new members to Llandrindod U3A and hope you enjoy your time with us.

June: Gwyneth Pugh

July: Kate Knight

Oct: Carol Bufton; Cheryl Davies; Glenys Mackie; Sheila Roberts; Lis and Nick Talbott

November: Mary Hobbs; Michael and Penni Stevenson.

Useful Contact numbers

Bob Atkins, Chairman: 01597 823292

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Cover photograph by Tony Hodges. See opposite page for more details.



Tony's cover photograph is of the Dome at Westonbury Mill. Here is another picture of the whole structure. It is composed of 5000 wine bottles and is now a fernery. How about that for recycling?

Computer Group

Over the past 20 years, the growth in use of computers and the Internet has had an increasingly significant impact on our everyday lives. Yet despite the marketing hype, computers are not easy to use ... though we may be getting more used to using them!

The aim of the group will be to help members with everyday computing tasks, and to get the best out of their computers, tablets, smartphones and other gadgets. We'll also be looking at issues such as Internet safety, making backups, moving files between computers, cameras and other gadgets, and home networking systems.

There will be a focus on making use of Open Source software, which is freely available to anyone who wants to use it and works on a wide range of computers.

The group will start meeting early in 2015. Any members who are interested are invited to get in touch and help set the list of topics for the first year's meetings.

The group will be led by Nick Talbott who was formerly IT Manager at Powys County Council and has had over 30 years experience working in the computer business. As well as his work for Powys, Nick has taught computing at evening classes and at Coleg Powys. He currently helps run the Powys Linux Users Group.

Contact Nick Talbott on 829072 or email nick@trosnant.net



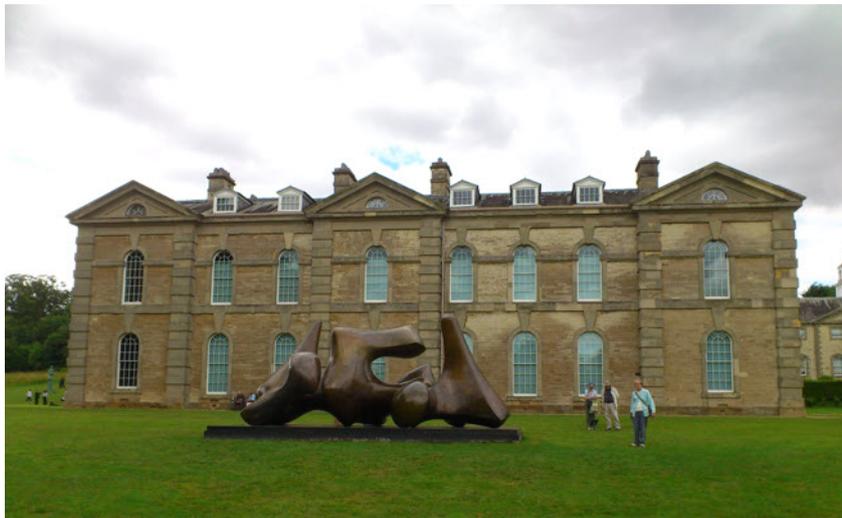
Singing for fun group.

After a busy singing session practising winter carols, the group enjoying hard-earned refreshments - birthday cake to celebrate Ewart's 70th and Scottish oatcakes to mark St Andrew's Day - photo by Barbara Warner

Compton Verney

In July some of the Art History members took a long day trip to Compton Verney near Stratford upon Avon. Why? Because one of the largest and certainly most unusual groupings of major sculpture seen in the UK was gathered together in these superb grounds and lovely old house.

The sculptors involved were Auguste Rodin and Henry Moore. A strange pairing you may think but Moore thought of Rodin as his mentor and both were fearless in breaking with tradition and, in so doing, revolutionising the way we look at sculpture.



The weather was kind and showed off the works dotted around the landscape perfectly. It was a great privilege to be able to stand eyeball to eyeball with such famous and enormously powerful works and there is no doubt that our perceptions of what we had seen in books, were changed.

For example Rodin's Eve, caught in the afternoon light shows not the normal, anodine renaissance lady, but a woman scared to bits and hiding her face from the light. And look at how perfectly Moore's work can complement Georgian architecture.

The galleries inside the house were packed with ephemera as well as works of sculpture. The excellent guided tour was like a university seminar and we came away much more informed about the mindset of these two great artists.

Stephen Ashley



Visit to "Question Time"

As part of the celebration of their 30th anniversary, Brecon U3A invited Radio 4's "Question Time" to the Theatr Brycheiniog on 24 October. A small group of members from Llandrindod Wells managed to get tickets.

It was a fascinating evening. None of us had previously been to a live radio broadcast so we did not mind having to get there terribly early and we enjoyed the jokey warm-up session with the producer immediately before the broadcast. The chairman of the panel was, as expected, Jonathan Dimbleby and the members were the First Minister Carwyn Jones; Rhun ap Iwerth who is Plaid Cymru's shadow minister of economy and enterprise; Bernard Jenkin the Conservative member for Harwich and North Essex; and Carol Bell (who is Welsh despite her name) and has a dual career as an academic archaeologist and an energy adviser executive.

We were all invited to place questions in a box in the foyer and ten were selected for possible discussion, with the speakers being warned that they might have their order changed or be cut out completely, depending how the discussions went. In the event, only 4 or 5 questions were taken because the panel spent so long in heated argument about a number of interlocking issues including the health service and the threatened new £1.7 billion contribution to the EU. We did not think that the level of debate was especially high and in particular thought that the First Minister was not on his best form, but we all enjoyed the evening greatly and were surprised at how quickly the end came.

Before we left, Jonathan Dimbleby thanked us all for coming over what he feared might have been long distances outside Brecon and asked us how many had travelled more than 5 miles to get to the theatre. He was amazed when practically the whole audience raised their hands and was even more amazed that there were still hands up for over 20 miles - including, of course, the entire Llandrindod contingent!

Martha Wooldridge



The Garden Visiting Group

Suzanne and Val enjoying the autumnal colours at Gliffaes Country House Hotel..

Fay Ramsden



Love's Labour's Lost - William Shakespeare.

Directed by Christopher Luscome

Kathryn Hunt - U3A Theatre Group 4th November 2014.



The play was placed in Edwardian times prior to World War I. Not by chance was this time picked, but very cleverly, to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the First World War. Oh, the poignancy of it all - 'pricking' our senses in so many different ways.

The youthful characters of the King of Navarre and his friends Berowne, Longaville and Dumaine, who all pledged the unattainable of giving up socialising with women - for three years! Youth, sweet youth! Of course they fall in love with The Princess of France and her ladies in waiting (beautifully costumed) immediately they set eyes on them. The men, after having pledged their disinterest in women didn't want to let each other know their true feelings of love, but each confessed, offering up their private thoughts on the rooftop. (heard by each other) A humorous scene which was enriched by the inclusion



of the childhood teddy bear of Dumaine. Together they decided to disguise themselves as Muscovites and court the ladies anyway. Part of their enticement included a wonderful Cossack dance. High kicks all round - what a fun! The wise women however were always aware of the four men's trickery and played along with it all until the truth came out.



Running alongside this plot was another which involved Don Armado from Spain who was given custody of Costard, the gardener who had been flirting with Jaquenetta the dairymaid. The Spaniard fell in love with Jaquenetta and laughter came easily from the audience as Nick Haverson played Costard with great humour and gusto.

Holofernes, and Sir Nathaniel have long over worded conversations with each other that totally lost their meaning with puns and double-entendres - all delivered with such speed and verbosity that the auto-cue for the hard of hearing was a blessing - at least it was for me! In fact the whole play made us aware of words, their meanings and the misinterpretations that can happen. Speak clearly and truthfully and perhaps meaning may

simply be better understood?

To end, a musical is performed by Holofernes, Sir Nathaniel, Dull the Police Constable (who was very reminiscent of the policeman in 'Ello 'Ello') and the house staff. This provided an enjoyable backdrop to the fast approaching bad news of the death of the Princess's father. Even more sadness is evoked in the very last scene of the play which shows four young men in uniform with the drums of war sounding in the background as they face the English manor house under blue skies; the women they have fallen in love with, and the people that have surrounded them and their carefree lives until now.

Will they/would they come back from war?

Interest Groups

Sadly we have not so far succeeded in obtaining a leader to run the proposed Spanish conversation group. This seems a pity, but if anyone is willing to take it on, please let me know.

On a more positive note, I am proposing to put a toe in the water with a German conversation group if I can get enough interest, and I will be putting up a notice for signatories at the next meeting. And on a even more positive note, we have found a volunteer to run a Computer Group which we hope to get up and running shortly, courtesy of a new and expert member, Nick Talbott. See p3 for details. *(Sorry, I can't work out how to do page numbers, so you will just have to count! Editor)*

Martha Wooldridge. Interest Group Coordinator

Ode to the U3A

When I reached a certain age
I thought that I might turn the page
I'll join the U3Age ...I know it's all the rage
Yes, that's certainly the way
I'll join the U3A today.

My family did me implore
"Dad, improve your IQ score
Just join the U3Age
You'll become a Sage
Do it right away!
Go and join the U3A."

I did my level best
But it really was a pest.
I failed the entrance test!
Not in the U3Age
I feel I'm in a cage
My life's without a ray
Outside the U3A

And so I only sit and mope,
Forlorn, I pray and hope
That soon the U3Age
Will accept my only Key One stage
I'm just living for the day
When I belong to the U3A
Until then, I rest my pen.

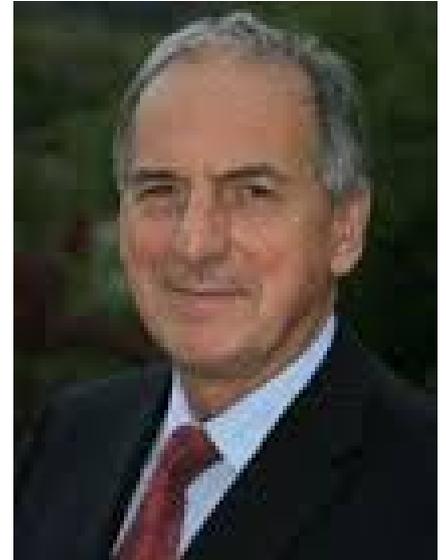
*As a responsible editor, I feel I should point out that is a joke, as of course the U3A doesn't have entrance exams. The author has since joined us and, if my memory serves me rightly, gave convincing proof of his IQ score when he captained one of the Llandrindod teams to a creditable 3rd place in the Mid Wales U3A Quiz. Patsy Godfrey persuaded Jack Davis to relinquish his anonymity and let Borderlines have this poem.
Editor*

Rosemary Maling Lecture Day

The Brecon U3A Rosemary Maling Lecture Day was a memorable day attended by Welsh U3A groups from Newport, Pembrokeshire to Chepstow.

The morning lecture "A Short History of Terrorism" was given by Dr Kim Howells, MP for Pontypridd from 1989 until 2010 and subsequently, and more significantly, Chair of the Intelligence & Security Committee.

Despite the write-up in the programme heralding a contentious firebrand, what we received was a subtle appraisal. The underlying message seemed to be that the causes of terrorism are multiple and complex and hence there are no short-term, simple solutions. We must expect to continue to encounter it. There will be occasions when aggressive action to eliminate it will be justified and essential. However, for the most part our politicians will continue to be faced with the complicated task of selecting the best path in security, commercial and political terms.



Perhaps like the rest of us Dr. Howells' youthful idealism has been tempered by the wisdom of the third age. His lecture was absorbing but I have to say not up-lifting. However, we were in safe hands. The committee at Brecon clearly knows how to arrange a good party. As people milled around fetching and enjoying the various delicacies available in the buffet, we were treated to an unforgettable musical experience. No one could have remained downhearted in the presence of the Swansea U3A ukulele band.

The afternoon session was a lecture by Dr Eric Midwinter. Such is the ubiquity of the U3A nowadays that I was surprised to find that one of the co-founders is still around to inspire and entertain us. I was somewhat dismayed to discover that it was three men who conceived the idea and one woman in her kitchen who carried out the admin. But then this was over 30 years ago, more than a generation past. I hope when the U4A is instigated it will be at the behest of one woman and supported by a committee of three men.



Dr Midwinter's pride in the development of the U3A movement and his admiration and affection for its membership were palpable. We came away with a renewed sense of the value to society of an independent, active, older generation.

On this day Brecon were also celebrating their 30th Anniversary and they took this opportunity to recognize the invaluable contribution that has been made by Jean Hosie by inscribing her on their Roll of Honour and Llandrindod's Patsy Godfrey was invited to present her with a bouquet. All in all a very good day.

Text Susan Jones



Merry Christmas to everyone

