

# Borderlines

Spring 2018

The Magazine of Llandrindod and District U3A



# Introduction from the Editor

Hello and welcome to the Spring(?) Edition of Borderlines. The Winter Edition was distributed a month late because we were snowbound, and, as I write, it seems quite possible the same thing will happen to these.

My thanks, as always, to our contributors, many of whom were pounced on at the very last minute. You will know them by their hunted look! Please keep the articles coming in and let Kathie and me know what you think of the magazine. With Nick's help we are gradually expanding our technical comfort zone - just see what a good job Kathie has made of the centre spread.

I would like to say a personal thank you to Eleanor Cuddy. I understand she is standing down as Membership Secretary for family reasons. No matter how far away Eleanor was, or how busy, she always ensured I had the list of new members for Borderlines. Thanks also to Alun, who was usually the messenger she employed!

With best wishes, Margaret

## New Members.

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

December : Dave Osborne

February: Janice Williams

## Useful Contact Numbers

Only a few of us this time, as the officers will be decided by election at the March AGM.

Interest Groups Coordinator Stephen Ashley: 01597 822587 [steve@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk](mailto:steve@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk)

Web Editor Nick Talbott: 01597 829072 [nick@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk](mailto:nick@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk)

Borderlines Editor Margaret Mason: 01597 825365 [margaret@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk](mailto:margaret@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk)

Assistant Editor Kathie Richards Jones: 01591 610538 [kathieerjones@btinternet](mailto:kathieerjones@btinternet)

Cover photograph by Judith Stafford. Julian walking in the snow at Abbey Cwmhir

## The Virtual Travel Group



Clive Barrett focuses on The Virtual Travel Group.

The Virtual Travel Group started in March 2013, so they have been going for nearly five years, although organiser Stephen Ashley admitted to me that it seems like only yesterday!!! There are over 30 names on their membership list, there being 20 present when I visited the January meeting. During the past 5 years they have “visited” as many places as there are members, for example Antarctica, Bali, Cuba, Falklands, Nepal, St. Helena and Vietnam. The original name of the group was Armchair Travel, and the object is to inspire members to get ideas and enjoy holidays, by way of speakers sharing their holiday experiences. At the commencement of the group's first meeting of 2018 which I attended, Stephen wryly asked members if their bags were packed and passports were to hand for their “armchair holiday” and gave details of the group's next future destinations.

The speaker at the above meeting was Rev.d Andrew Tweed, whose holiday talk was entitled “ Llandrindod to Malta by Train”. With the aid of a power point presentation, he gave together with light hearted comments a detailed account of his first class rail return journey from Mid Wales to the famous wartime island of Malta, via The Alps, sleeping car to the foot of Italy, a short crossing to Sicily, and a longer ferry crossing to Valleta. He described his experiences of Malta, and the return journey via Rome, Venice, Paris, and Euston. Andrew then answered some questions, including when was the best time to go, it being cooler in the spring and autumn months, he followed this with advice and recommendations on the holiday. Organiser Stephen Ashley thanked the speaker for an excellent lecture, which members appeared to enjoy very much on the morning I attended.

# Full steam ahead for the Rail Riders

by David Horne

Our Rail Riders group planned and booked a Christmas lunch on the Severn Valley Railway (SVR). We could choose from three days, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. Of course the U3A Christmas luncheon was scheduled for the Monday, so we opted for the Wednesday - we had no idea what a fortunate stroke of luck this turned out to be!

Our little band of eight intrepid travellers (see right) made plans and contingencies, but all were in doubt due to the severe winter weather over the previous weekend.

According to their website SVR had cancelled many services but we were told they were planning for the Wednesday trip to go ahead if safe. By the Tuesday night nothing negative had been heard so I contacted everyone accordingly.

Following an early morning start (6.0am just in case...) we finally got together in Penybont and set off in a two car convoy to Kidderminster in deepest darkest England. The roads were good and quiet and the snowy landscape was beautiful.

The car park at Kidderminster (see below) provided the trickiest element of the journey as it was very icy. But once inside we had hot beverages and checked in.



There were many people there for various events and the atmosphere was enhanced by the decorations, carol singers, and “other entertainers” as well of lots of quiet and well behaved school children waiting for a Santa special trip! We had photos taken on Santa’s sleigh before embarking on our train.

The train was double-headed with a steam engine at the rear and a diesel in front. The diesel pulled for the outward trip with the steam engine pulling us for the return. There were 10 carriages including a restaurant car. The school children filled all but one of the carriages which was taken by us. It was a nice old-fashioned one made up of compartments with a sliding door so you could shut out any unwelcome noise and retain any heat.

The trip took 30 minutes and we ended up in Highley. When we disembarked we waited to move to the engine shed where the meal would be served and as the train pulled away from the station with the children still on board we were waving and smiling from all parties.



We had time to look around some of their exhibits, including Gordon the blue engine. No, not the Gordon of Thomas the Tank Engine fame but a large blue engine named after General Gordon of Khartoum (although it did look very similar!)

There was a Royal Mail Carriage and King George V1 Royal saloon carriage with a lot of other interesting exhibits and memorabilia well worth a separate visit.



The festive table was decorated with lots of trimmings and we all had individual crackers to pull and a small box with some party items in such as party poppers. There was an extensive choice of menu (see bottom left).

At 13.50 hrs we were asked to return to the station to board the train for the journey back to Kidderminster.

We arrived back in Llandrindod at about 5.15pm and I think it is safe to say that the trip was an unqualified success, with everyone enjoying the whole experience.

Plans are afoot for the next trip, probably during the summer months and maybe in conjunction with the Charabanc group.



**Pictured:**

**Top right - Highley Station. Above - Gordon. Bottom right - our happy group of Rail Riders gathered around Santa's sleigh prior to boarding the train.**

The lunch was served at 12 noon. On the menu was Roast Turkey, Pigs-in-Blankets, Stuffing, Cranberry Sauce and Vegetables or Cod Loin wrapped in Smoked Bacon and Vegetables.

To follow we had a choice of Truffle Torte with a gold shimmering Profiterole, Baked Winter Cheesecake or Christmas Pudding with Custard with an additional Mince Pie.



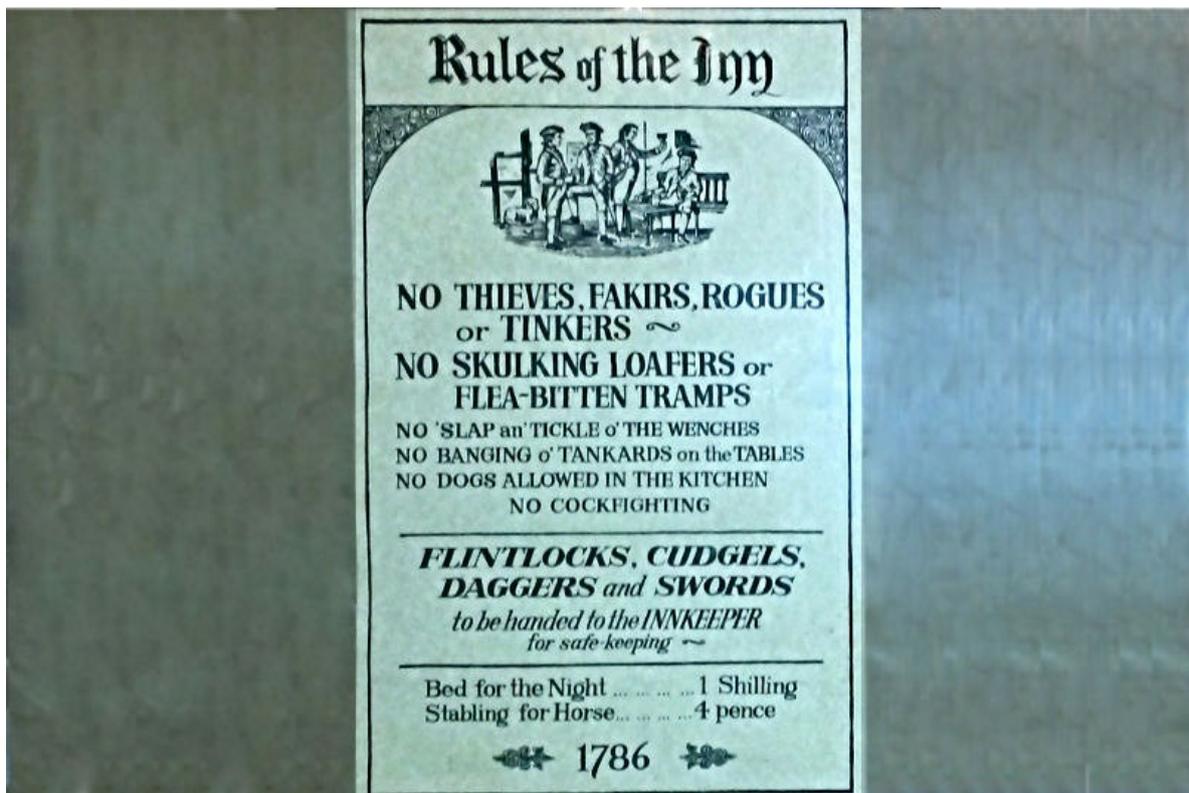
# The Walking Group

Elsa Harflett



Taken on the hills above Llanwrtyd. L-R: Helen, Jackie, Ann, Pat and Barbara, with dogs Rhubarb and Llewelyn. Where were the men, I hear you ask! Surely they can't have been put off by a drop of rain?

A 1786 poster from The Neuadd Arms where we had lunch - we found it amusing, though none of us was prepared to surrender our flintlocks to the Landlord....



# Janet Swindale - the Town Crier of Llandrindod Wells.

For those of you who missed the meeting in January, Clive Barrett has provided a special report for Borderlines. This highlights Janet's work as Town Crier.

The January meeting was opened by Llandrindod Town Crier Janet Swindale, with the usual "Oyez, Oyez" declaration. In the absence of the Chairman Berwyn Woolnough, and Vice Chair Penny Everett, the group's website editor Nick Talbott introduced speaker Janet Swindale, who he described as a "wonderful town crier". Her talk was entitled "Eccentricity ---- Look Where Its Got Me" and greatly included her Town Crier duties.

The speaker went on to talk about her activities as the Town Crier including the Town Crier competition, culminating in being invited to be Llandrindod Town Crier in 2013, being accepted into the Guild of Town Criers in 2014. Her present and future aim being to represent and promote the town extensively, especially welcoming visitors arriving at the local rail station by train, and even showing visitors around the town and giving talks to residents at the Glen Usk Hotel. She gave a brief history of "the Ancient & Honourable Guild of Town Criers", and stated that she had been involved with the Transition Town May Fayre, mentioning that this year (2018) is the 150th anniversary of the Heart of Wales Line being completed, and last year she had been part of the Queen's Baton visiting Llandrindod Wells. Janet declared that she enjoyed the role, and making people happy. The talk illustrated by a power point presentation was probably one of the most humorous and entertaining experienced at a local U3A lecture, signified by how quickly the time passed. At the end rather than questions there were observations from members who obviously really enjoyed the morning. One of these statements was that in the early years the Victorian Festival received generous grants, but that in more recent years dedicated volunteers such as Janet had carried on the great tradition of the nine day event with very hard work. Janet was thanked by Nick Talbott for a wonderfully entertaining talk.

## Mind Your Language

Berwyn's article on the English language in the last magazine provoked the following response from Steve Ashley.

### *Felicitations*

*As the quarterbacking participator of our localised protogeriatric learning receptor unit institution, you might like to consider onboarding the item entitled "Are these the worst examples of business jargon" on today's BBC News website. One does need to constantly upgrade one's on-track bandwidth in linguistic comprehension in order to retain an agility in collective sharing.*

### *Valedictions*

Steve also recommends the book *Mother Tongue*, by Bill Bryson

## A Monthly Meeting Monologue, featuring Llandod's answer to Hyacinth Bucket

Have you taken the dogs dear? Oh jolly good. I'm just finishing my hair. You're surely not going to wear those trousers, Nigel. Put your corduroys on. They're James Pringle. Simon always looks so smart. You don't want to let the side down.

Try and park near the door, dear. I don't want to get my highlights wet and it's pouring. That's right, drop me off and now you go and park. Are we late? I don't want to miss -

"Yes Good morning Fay. Isn't it ghastly?"

Don't linger, Nigel - I'm gasping. There's nothing we need at the desk, dear. What's that box for? What does it say? Subs? Oh God! Try and pay them before Xmas this year, dear. I had to buy a smaller turkey last year.

"Oh hello Margery - how's the leg? Jolly good. Mustn't stop. We're just off to get some coffee - I'm gasping"

Oh dear, there is quite a queue.

"Yes - I think I was before you."

"Oh hello, Simon. Oh, thank you, Simon. Well - yes I have - just some highlights you know. But they do cheer one up."

Quick, Nigel -grab your coffee and get near the front before that lot get in, otherwise we'll never hear and I need my leg to be out in the aisle. Yes - that's good. Not too near Hermione - I've still got her umbrella. Oh dear, have you spilt it? - never mind - rub it in with your foot. They'll never know - the carpet's probably filthy anyway. Put your cup under the chair. The boy will take it away. . I'll do the Notice Board afterwards. There's always a crowd around it. I had to elbow my way in last month.

Sssh! It's starting. What's he saying? Not the damn subs again. It's not as if they're hard up. I think it's rather rude to ask outright. Oh God - keep your head down, dear - they're asking for volunteers for the Committee again. Quick - pretend we are reading Borderlines.

Oh - wasn't it an awful bore? I mean who organises these talks? Still at least we've had a coffee and kept out of the rain. I'm just off to look at the Notice Board now. Go to the toilet, Nigel and then we can be off. Whatever you do, avoid the Thompsons. If I have to hear about that bloody cruise one more time I'll die. For God's sake don't say we only went to the Isle of Wight. It was so embarrassing last year when I told them we'd been to Cuba and you told them we'd been walking in the Alps. I mean - who's going to believe that?

I've seen the Notice Board now. We can leave, Nigel. Are you sure you don't need to go to the toilet before we go? No? Try and hang on till we get home then. I was wondering, dear. Could you run me into Hereford tomorrow. I think Edinburgh Wool have got a sale on.