

# Borderlines

Autumn 2019



The magazine of Llandrindod and District U3A



# Introduction from the Editor

Welcome to the Autumn 2019 edition of Borderlines. Kathy and I would like to thank our contributors, who have, as usual, come up trumps!

I would just like to add a personal thanks to Patsy. She not only encouraged me to join U3A, but I think she also named Borderlines. Can anyone confirm this? I believe there was a competition. You will be greatly missed, Patsy, but I am sure you will love your new home.

With best wishes, Margaret

## Welcome

The following new members have joined U3A. We hope you enjoy your time with us.

## Please note:

Llandrindod U3A has found that the insurance cover that we all pay for through our annual subscription is void if a non-member attends an event that, for whatever reason, results in a claim. Should a claim be made we have to be able to provide evidence of who was at the event and that they were all paid-up members. This means that for every U3A event (Main meeting, Interest Groups etc) we will now be required to record those who have attended. These registers will then be checked by the Treasurer against the list of paid up members. This is now common practice amongst other U3As, as we all face the same problem.

This will also throw up the names of those who have forgotten to pay their subscription, which was due in March. If this is you, please act now to avoid embarrassment! It is actually a bargain. I was talking to Margaret Easteal and Robert Bevan about the very early days, when Margaret said she collected £3 per lecture. We now get 12 lectures for £25, plus coffee, - and access to all the interest groups as well!

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Cover: The Landscape History group visits Pembrokeshire. T Couzens



## Patsy Godfrey

Robert Bevan, Jane and Roger Malvern,  
Margaret Mason and Ann Wheatley.

As many of you know, Patsy Godfrey is moving to Corsham this month. Although a difficult decision to make, the move will take her nearer her children, particularly her younger son, Will. He is known to many members of Mid Wales U3A's as he regularly gave up part of his holiday to compile and compere the Mid Wales Quiz.

For those of you who do not realise the immense contribution Patsy has made to Llandrindod U3A, here is a brief guide.

Patsy had been an enthusiastic member of U3A in Darlington, so when she returned to her homeland she immediately set about looking for a local group to join. Finding there wasn't one, Patsy says, "A group of us formed Llandrindod U3A." Another founder member, Robert Bevan, says, "Patsy was really the guiding force. We initially had a small lecture group, but it was Patsy's previous involvement with U3A that was the catalyst for our joining the movement."

When Llandrindod U3A was formed in 2006, with Robert as Chairman and Margaret Eastal as Treasurer, Patsy became Secretary. After about 6 months it became obvious that there was too much work for one person, so the post was divided into Programme Secretary (Patsy), and General Secretary (Jill Clay).

In 2011 Patsy became Chair. She has been an enthusiastic member of many of the Interest Groups, as well as running her own on Classical Mythology.

Her involvement with U3A did not stop in Landrindod. She was Trustee for Wales for a year. She says about that time "You see such different ways of doing things when you visit other groups, and I have met such interesting people. The main drawback was the travelling, which was very tiring. Also I became very good at getting lost!"

For many years Patsy was closely associated with the Mid Wales Network on U3A groups. When asked what is special about U3A, Patsy says, "I have worked in education all my life and really believe in it. So I would have to say the priority for U3A is education for life, learning from one another and keeping mentally and physically fit."

Patsy herself has certainly lived up to those principles – and she is not stopping yet. Noticing there is no Art History Group at her new home, she's already making plans to start one!

Patsy, all of us at Llandrindod U3A wish you the very best in your new life.

# JULY JAUNT

By Terry Couzens, Landscape History Group Leader

Pictured on the front cover of this *Borderlines* are seven of our members who set off for Pembrokeshire early in July, on a glorious summer's day. The first stop was Castell Henllys, a reconstructed Iron Age Hillfort in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.

Following a lengthy excavation of the site some 20 years back, it was decided to construct roundhouses using materials of the time; and they were sited using exactly the same postholes found during the excavation. Currently there are three large roundhouses and a granary on the site.

The banks and ditches, including an original section of stone wall from the Iron Age, can be found around the site, and at the entrance there is a band of *Chevaux de Fris* that was discovered under a later earthen bank. *Chevaux de Fris* is a bed of half buried stones used as a defence against horses, men and even wheeled vehicles like chariots. The band of stones would seriously slow down attackers at the point they came into reach of slingshot. A pile of two thousand hand-size stones had been found to the side of the entrance.



After seeing how Iron Age farmers lived, and a light lunch, the group travelled a short distance to St. Brynach's church in Nevern. St. Brynach, a friend of St. David, founded a church on this site next to the river Nanhyfer below a Celtic stronghold, and he is reputed to have died 570AD.

This was the 'Age of the Saints' 1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, before St. Augustine's arrival from Rome in 597. Other than the Norman tower, the present church is late perpendicular so presumably built 1425-1525. A beautifully kept village church in what appears to have been originally a small circular churchyard with a short avenue of ancient yew trees. One of these is known as the 'the bleeding tree' as it continuously exudes a red sap, and has been doing so for maybe many hundreds of years, but at least 70 years to my knowledge.



Among other interesting monuments there are two stones with Roman dedications in both Latin and Ogham script - the latter being a rare Irish alphabet from 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> C AD. Also in the churchyard is the 13 foot Great Cross, created around the 10<sup>th</sup> C - probably the finest carved Celtic cross in Wales. Its top piece is a 'wheel cross'; but the whole cross is covered with intricate typical Celtic patterns.

And if all this wasn't enough, the party then ascended the wooded hill behind the church to seek out Nevern Castle; the only



site that I had not visited before. We discovered amazing earthworks in the woodland - at least two incredibly deep bank-and-ditch ramparts, like a rainforest rich in abundant ferns and other woodland plants and then the site opened out into a clearing with a high motte to one side, crowned with the base of a stone tower.

above the church and village. This was an unusually complex and well defended site compared with most border Norman motte and baileys, but most likely the site was originally a Celtic Welsh stronghold long before the Normans arrive.

Within a 3.5 kilometre distance in rural Pembrokeshire we had encountered the farmers of the Iron Age, the Celtic Christians of Wales, and the imposition of the Norman Lords... and all back home before dinner!

**Enjoying the July Jaunt are Mark and Isobel Wardley, Elsa Harflett, Jill Willey, Jackie Hankey and Barry Capsey.**



Beyond the motte was another deep ditch, but a stone and earthen bank did run from the side of the base of the motte out to the platform of another tower situated high



# U3A Railriders Group : Welsh Highland railway to Blaenau Ffestiniog on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019

The intrepid travellers met up at 8am at the Metropole car park to journey far and wide – well to Porthmadog at least. I have to say the drive to Porthmadog was very scenic in itself and worth the trip alone.



We arrived in plenty of time, collected our tickets and had time to have refreshments and browse round the station shop before boarding our train – the C235 “David Lloyd George” – a Double Fairlie engine. An odd machine with a funnel at each end.

Travelling 3<sup>rd</sup> class the journey took us through some of the best rail side scenery and the weather was clear enough for us to see it. We stopped at Minffordd, Penrhyn, Tanybwllch, Dduallt where the track looped round 360 degrees to navigate a hill,

Tanygrisiau and arriving in Blaenau Ffestiniog approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes later.

Ffestiniog is a small community which is best enjoyed in good weather. While it would have been nice to explore the town the weather dictated otherwise with most of us seeking shelter from the cold in charity shops or the visitor centre or finding somewhere to eat. We originally arranged to meet up for the return train at 3.50pm but 6 of us decided to get an earlier train back and spent the time on Porthmadog instead and to meet the later train with the other 5 from the group.

Unfortunately 3 of those missed the 3.50 train! Catching a bus instead and arriving back in Porthmadog before the

3.50 train. The 6 arrived in time to meet the train only to find the gang 3 already there. The last 2 arrived safely back on the train. So we ended up with not just a railway ride but car and bus as well. Value for money I would say.



By David Horne

# Theatre Group Visit to see as You Like It

by Will Francis

On a misty Thursday morning on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at 8 am, an anticipatory group of 44 Llandrindod U3A members boarded a large, comfortable Celtic Travel coach, bound for Stratford upon Avon. The 2 1/2 hour journey through rolling hills, rivers and woodland, in the lush late Spring green, is some of the loveliest countryside in the UK, crossing eastern Powys, Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire.

Their objective, shopping and to watch William Shakespeare's play 'As you like it'.

The play was written in 1599/1600 when Shakespeare was 35, seventeen years since he left home and eight years after 1591, when it was recorded that he had collaborated with other writers in writing the dramatic adaptation of the for the stage, Henry V1.

By 1599 he would have been a successful standalone playwright.

'As you like it' is an odd, disjointed, partly reflective comedy, with events and circumstances, but no real plot, set mainly in the Forest of Arden, which is close to Stratford and where a young William would have perhaps poached deer and rabbits. The play revolves around the Duke banished into the forest with his attendant lords by his younger brother Frederick, the usurper of his dominions. The Duke's daughter Rosalind still lives as a companion with Celia the daughter of Frederick. There is Orlando, the disinherited and frustrated middle son of Sir Rowland de Boys and his two brothers Oliver the eldest and inheritor, and Jacques the younger. There is also Touchstone, Celia's clown, a number of shepherds, a shepherdess, a country fellow, a country wench, a vicar and 'Hymen' the Greek and Roman god of marriage. A series of events now propel the story. Orlando defeats Frederick's wrestling champion, witnessed by Rosalind who falls in love with him. Orlando is then forced to flee to the forest with his attendant. Rosalind is also forced to flee to the forest by Frederick, but she disguises herself as a youth and takes Celia and Touchstone with her. Circumstances and events have now conspired to get all of these actors into the forest, where the disguised Rosalind now meets Orlando and they fall in love. Now the story gets really complicated and confusing with everyone seeming to fall in love with someone. Eventually everything ends well, Frederick has a damascene moment in the forest, and gives his lands back to his brother the banished Duke, and finally everyone gets married to the right person. Hymen then appears and blesses everyone.

England was moving towards the final years of Elizabeth's reign, and with no apparent successor yet being named, the immediate future looked at best, cloudy, and at worst stormy. Perhaps the impending demise of Elizabeth and what that might mean for him, his family, the theatre and the future of England made him reflective. Was it his personal life? It was seventeen years since he had married Anne and he rarely went back to Stratford, which would have been a difficult four day journey. Perhaps a view and reflection of a failing Elizabeth? As an ex comic actor, he wrote directly for and at his audience who wanted a complicated series of events which they could relate both to the existing public or political situation with perhaps also indicating individual people. Perhaps that's why Shakespeare's plays have survived for so long - his plays always seem to mirror present day events!

## Art History Trip to visit Abbey Dore and the Church of St Mary and St Davids at Kilpeck.

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, 12 people from the Art History group visited Abbey Dore and Kilpeck church in the Golden Valley. This followed a talk at our May meeting on the 'Herefordshire School of Romanesque Sculpture'.

We travelled via Hay-on Wye and noted Peterchurch Church, which is similar to the church at Kilpeck, but not decorated, and has a fibreglass replacement spire.

Dore Abbey was founded in 1175, built by the Cistercian Monks, as was Abbeycwmhir and Tintern; after the Norman Conquest.

In 1535 after the repression of the monasteries, much was demolished but in 1634 the remaining building was restored by Lord Scudamore who added a rood screen carved by the King's carpenter. The building and carvings were very impressive.

From Abbey Dore we had lunch at the Kilpeck Inn, and then on to the Church of St Mary and St David at Kilpeck. It was founded in 1134 with the remains of the castle nearby.

Everyone was amazed at the detail and crispness of the carvings, while the 57 corbels around the church made us smile.

We all enjoyed our visit to see these two ecclesiastical buildings in the Golden Valley.



By Josie Lewis,  
Pam Mills and  
Jill Mouncer