Llandrindod Wells & District U3A Annual General Meeting and Lecture Meeting March 2018

Report by Clive Barrett

Chairman Berwyn Woolnough welcomed everyone to the AGM, and in his report traced some of the main activities of the local U3A during the last 12 months. He stated that it had been another flourishing successful year, with a wide range of lectures and about 130 members attending each month. The membership was at present 264, the same as last year due to members joining and leaving. Berwyn thanked in turn everyone who had helped the group during the last 12 months.

Treasurer Alun Thomas stated that the financial position was the same as last year, and the accounts were duly accepted by the meeting.

Election of Officers:

Chairman, Berwyn Woolnough

Vice Chairman, Penny Everett

Treasurer Alun Thomas

Assistant Treasurer Chris Thomas

Committee Secretary, Sue Parsons

Programme Secretary, Sue Turner

Membership Secretary, Roger Malvern

Interest Groups Co-Ordinator Stephen Ashley

Martin Nosworthy was appointed as Auditor

Finally an Object Clause amendment advised by the Third Age Trust, was unanimously agreed by members.

The Chairman then introduced Rod Evans of Newtown U3A, whose talk was entitled "Murray the Hump" and detailed the very colourful life of Llewellyn Morris Humphrys (1899 – 1965).

It could be said at the outset that this was a fascinating and powerful lecture about someone the audience hadn't heard of, and yet he became " the most powerful gangster in America". He was initially described as a Chicago mobster of Welsh descent, whose father came from Carno and mother from Staylittle. The family moved to Chicago in the late 1800's, but Llewellyn as he was originally known left school at the very early age of 7 (because his father was an alcoholic). He started by selling newspapers, became a member of street gangs, although he was in the foster care of Jack Murray, who tutored him in the law. However he turned his back on this guidance, got involved in robbery and theft was arrested, aged 16 served 60 days for petty larceny.

In 1921 Murray as he was now known, moved from Chicago to Oklahoma, and married a female of European / Red Indian descent. He met Welshman Fred Evans and they sold illegal alcohol, which they had stolen from lorries. At the time he upset Al Capone, but later joined his gang. Murray and Fred took over Chicago labour unions and introduced casinos. They got friendly with politicians,

and were involved in the St. Valentine's Massacre … men dressed as Police Officers murdered the Bugs Gang. They took over Trade Unions after bootlegging, and found an ingenious way of making money, by enforcing service charges for those workers who lived in high rise flats, for goods and services provided. Murray and Fred also wanted to control Hollywood by taking over the unions, during the years 1937/38 union membership rose from 200 to 14 thousand, at this time they made a lot of money from their links with Hollywood, plus backhanders. Due to her father's influence Murray's daughter Llewella is known to have met stars like Rita Hayward, Frank Sinatra, James Stewart and George Burns. The speaker revealed that she had a daughter with Rossano Brazzi, later the male lead in the musical "South Pacific". Murray later tried to control politicians and their elections, which in turn helped with their corrupt sideline of setting up gambling dens and brothels. Amazingly Rod Evans stated that Murray also had links with at least two former USA Presidents, Harry S.Truman and Dwight Eisenhower. Later he was associated with Joseph Kennedy, firstly against each other, and then they became friends, and it was said he helped John F.Kennedy to get elected, and in the early 1960's was involved in the Bay of Pigs, and |Cuban Missile Crisis. Murray also made money by buying some shares from a person who wanted to disappear, and selling them later at a profit. He was involved when one of the judges introduced the 5th Amendment, and because of kidnapping and tax funds Hump spent more time in prison, later trailed by the FBI they could only catch him on a minor offence.

In 1965 the Police turned up at his home to question him, but found him lying dead in his lounge, he officially died of a heart attack. If an empty syringe had been inserted into the small hole that was found it would have caused fatal damage. At the end of the lecture I did wonder if "Murray the Hump" would have been more famous, if he had led a honest rather than criminal lifestyle.

Following some questions, the Chairman thanked the speaker for a fascinating talk, of a little known person. The next Llandrindod & District U3A lecture meeting is on Monday 9 April at the Hotel Metropole at 10:30a.m, when the speaker will be Tamsin Westhorpe, and her talk is entitled " Life as a Gardening Editor"