



Llandrindod Wells and District

Dear Llandrindod U3A Member

Welcome to the first Newsletter of 2021 – The 10th Newsletter

Wishing you all hope for a better year, and the patience and stoicism to continue to endure the “darkest hours before the dawn”. I know some of you have already been called for your first vaccination. I consider us privileged to be part of the catchment for what has been voted one of the best Doctors Surgeries in the country and to have the vaccination centre on our doorstep at Builth Wells. If you are called for vaccination and have problems attending or know of any U3A members who may need help with transport please let me know via telephone or email.

My Coronavirus Christmas

It has always been the privilege of the chair to give the introductions at our main meetings, tell stories, amusing anecdotes As a captive audience there has been no escape, the advantage of the Newsletter is you can skip the bits you are not interested in, so those of you who do not want to share my own Christmas anecdote and musing please skip this introduction and move to the U3A news.

I am sharing this as a record of just one U3A member’s experience of the festive season.

Told we could have up to three households for Christmas we were planning for my son and one daughter to come with their respective families which included children aged 4,5,7,8 and 12. Starved of their company since March the house was turned into something resembling Santa’s Grotto it took me a week, trees, tinsel, greenery, every bubble for three generations. Turkey etc ordered, cupboards stocked, far too many presents wrapped and strategically placed.

On the Saturday the news was delivered, one household for one Christmas day, too far to travel, too disruptive for young children, no Christmas with family.

Then on the Sunday we received news that my brother in law who was taken into hospital with a broken hip had contracted the Virus and passed away. No time now for anything other than organising his funeral, which with the help of a wonderful funeral director and church was held on Christmas Eve eve in Cheshire. It was a truly lovely service and we were touched by the members of the Church congregation who took time to attend. The funeral director had to leave quite quickly as he had five funerals that day, still two more to go. How many families and individuals must be in our position?

Our two children attended the funeral and after the interment (no wake, no get together with the other mourners) we moved to a local supermarket car park where in the gathering gloom of a rainstorm, presents and food parcels were given out and exchanged into car boots.

In sharing what we would miss most, I included singing in carol services. Coming from the generation that started each school day with a hymn and for a while being a teacher, I really miss the carol services, school, church and community singing. Aaarrrrh said my children, we can do something about that! Christmas Eve (next day) we would Zoom altogether with my daughter and her family in the USA and have a family carol concert with instruments including Tuba, Cornet and Piano. It later transpired that the 8 year old and 4 year old who had asked for and were to receive a keyboard and junior guitar were rather "miffed" that the concert was not to be held on boxing day so they could also play their new instruments!

So the "cheer up" family Zoom carol concert was arranged, words arrived, music set up ready to go. The family in USA were also on line and we were off. I can now hear the laughter from those of you who have tried to hold your singing groups and instrumental groups over Zoom. Now factor in a delay from USA. It was a disaster! This concert will go down in family history as the "Abstract" carol concert and the laughter at the time will echo down the years in the retelling.

Humour and laughter can be found in the strangest places and times and is to be treasured, probably even more in times of grief, loss and disappointment. Sympathy and empathy have their place but for me smiles and laughter is the tonic which helps most.

Llandrindod Wells and District U3A Annual General Meeting

It is clear that in the current national emergency we will not be meeting together in the next couple of months. At our January committee meeting we decided that our AGM, usually held in March, will be postponed until June. This is allowed under our constitution which requires the AGM to be "held in the month of March in each year or as soon as practicable thereafter but not later than 15 months after the preceding Annual General Meeting." The current committee members will remain in place until the AGM.

Interest Groups

Computer Group

The Computer Group will be starting a new series of Zoom sessions on "Working with Files" on Monday 18th January. The sessions will cover finding files, opening files, renaming or moving files, copying files to and from USB memory sticks and external hard drives, using "cloud" storage, working with zip files and anything else you might want to know about files. The sessions will be suitable for those using Linux, Windows or Mac computers.

Virtual meetings will take place at roughly two week intervals. If you would like to join the group for this topic please [contact Nick Talbott](#). You do not need to have previously come to

the computer group meetings, and you don't have to be "good" with computers ... just interested to know more!

Art Group

A couple of members have been watching The Joy of Painting by Bob Ross on TV. They have been enjoying having a go at wet on wet oil painting. We look forward to seeing the results in due course! If you have been doing any creative work during the lockdown please share a photo or two with us for the website.

Recorder Group

An experimental session to try playing together over Zoom was held on 6th January. Despite the enthusiastic participation of many members, the technical problems of delays in transmission and the difficulty hearing others playing showed that Zoom was not going to work for us! However the group did enjoy their virtual meeting!

Creative Writing Group

in January members of the Creative Writing group were each invited to submit a 100-word view of last year – with the caveat that the following words could NOT be included: Covid-10; Coronavirus; Isolation; Sheltering. You can read their responses in the file accompanying this newsletter.

You may be as interested as I was to learn that the recent joint production with the Art Group, "The Art of Creative Writing", is now on deposit with the British Library and five other major libraries following a request in accordance with the Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003. So our work will be catalogued, indexed and preserved for future generations!

Aberystwyth U3A Zoom Meetings

Aberystwyth have kindly extended their invitation to our members to take part in their programme of online talks which are held on Tuesdays at 10:30am. Full details of how to join the talks are available on the [Aberystwyth U3A website](#). These are the talks coming up in the next month ...

- January 19th: Pat Griffiths on "How did YOU learn to WRITE?", following up her earlier talk on learning to read.
- January 26th: Vince Howells on "The 1921 Abermule train disaster"
- February 2nd: Nigel Humphreys on "The Paintings of Jacques-Louis David"
- February 9th: (Speculatively) Heather Williams on "Returning from Afghanistan"; a sequel to her earlier talk, the tale of the return journey, both overland and by sea from Afghanistan.
- February 16th: Nigel Humphreys on "Miss Daisy's Diary 1916–1918; recording meetings with Rasputin, Lenin and the outbreak of the Russian Revolution" – extracted from the diary edited by local artist Muriel Delahaye.

"V is for Vaccination – from Cowpox to Covid"

Rhian Morgan, from The Institute of Medical Genetics at Cardiff University, let us know of this online talk. You may remember Rhian's excellent talk in 2019 on Richard III. Unfortunately the talk is now fully booked, as is a repeat of the talk arranged in response to the demand. However do check [the Eventbrite booking page](#) in case a further date is arranged.

U3A National Projects

The New Year message from Sam Mauger, CEO, and Ian McCannah, Chair of the Third Age Trust, is [available to view on YouTube](#).

Comments made by Ian McCannah initiated a debate in our committee meeting on membership "criterion" and proposals by the National office to possibly widen membership to new groups. So after the committee meeting I listened again and left the link running which took me to the 2017 Celebration 1,000 U3A's by Dr Eric Midwinter, one of the original leading lights of the movement. It was (after a rambling introduction!) a fascinating lecture on the heritage and future of the U3A movement and well worth listening to (about 18 minutes long) giving some very interesting facts, figures, views on the origins of the U3A movement. If we follow the original principles it seems we may all be anarchists, and have to change the name of interest group leaders to conveners!

I could only agree that U3A is about changing the view of older age in the modern society and reiterating we are a self help movement "Learning joyfully together in a social environment". Here's to the return of the social environment element ASAP!

Aberystwyth University English and Creative Writing department's [possible] project linked to the 2021 census

We mentioned this project in the last newsletter asking for u3a members help. The project now seems to be in question on two grounds 1) There is talk of the 2021 National census being delayed to 2022 2) All the Universities are facing financial cuts and projects are being reassessed across all Universities and Departments. [Kathie Richards-Jones](#) will liaise with Aberystwyth University and you should email her if you are interested in the project.

National High Street Project

The project seems to be developing exponentially, now open to any and all U3A members who wish to participate regardless of involvement in the first phase.

Karyn and Wynne Evans did the survey of Rhayader High Street while Meg Lewis and I did Llandrindod Wells. An update on the project with information about a workshop (virtual) on 26th January is in a file accompanying this newsletter. Please [let Karyn know](#) if you decide to tune into any of the offered workshops as your feedback would be appreciated.

U3A National Website

A reminder that there are some very good articles and videos available on the [U3A National website](#) so enjoy your browsing and let us know if you find anything you would like to recommend and share.

The committee send their best wishes to you all.

Keep safe!

Karen Latham

Chair, Llandrindod Wells and District **u3a**

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The contact information for all Interest group leaders is available on the [Llandrindod U3A website](#).