



Llandrindod Wells and District

Dear Llandrindod U3A Member

Welcome to our August 2021 Newsletter (number 15)

Sitting with friends and talking about the subject of age, perceptions and attitudes I recounted a very personal anecdote which they enjoyed so I will share with you all.

My own mother, was privately educated in a small group, living a very privileged and sheltered life until the age of 17 when her own father passed away and her world changed radically, house sold, work required to live, followed, soon after by World War 11. Mum became an engineer in a large factory in Manchester – all very Catherine Cookson for real. She no matter what, retained her poise and was always beautifully “turned out” (I must have been a grave disappointment) I truly believed she was 76 years old when she died, it was only sitting in a pew with her order of service in front of me that I worked out she had died aged 81 years old. No one would have guessed – not even her children. She had decided at some point she would remain at 76 years old so she morphed the years and did.

So never ask me how old I am. I have not yet decided.

Welcome

To Gail McKechnie our latest new member, we look forward to meeting in person all the new members who have joined during this time of suspension of the main meetings.

Normally, the loss of existing members over the year, for whatever reason, is roughly balanced by the gain of new members. This has not happened this year with notable exceptions and so overall membership is down. We are hoping as we become fully operational again we will be able to welcome more new members into our u3a “family”

A big thank you to

Alun Thomas our previous Treasurer, Our u3a had a separate bank account in London. It was set up a number of years ago as an account which would be higher interest. The account has now been closed with Alun’s help and the money from that account which stood at £4,535.83 is now transferred into our account at HSBC locally. We were receiving virtually no interest and all the documents had to be changed every time the committee changed. The committee agreed that it was more sensible in view of the low interest and work involved to consolidate our resources.

The Garden Visiting Group who both produced and trialled the "Emergency Contact" cards, collected at the beginning of the visits and returned at the end. It worked well and we will be implementing in future for all u3a off site visits.

Restarting Main Meetings

At our committee meeting on the 12th August the key agenda item restarting the main meetings. I was at the time bitterly disappointed that I was the only committee member who wished to start our programme of main meetings on the 13th September. One committee member abstained all the rest said they thought it too early as Wales was only just lifting restrictions and we should wait until October. Not news I wished to deliver.

Now for those of you who appreciate irony. I am in my fifth day of Covid lockdown having contracted the virus last week. Even double jabbed both I and my husband Alan have been very poorly. I would not wish this on anyone and so I too now fully support the decision to hold off on the main meeting until 11th of October.

Please put the following dates into your diaries for meetings in the Metropole Hotel up until Christmas when hopefully we will be together for a Christmas lunch:

- Monday 11th October. Dean Powell – "Glyn Houston – A Black & White Actor" which Dean recommends as a talk which goes down particularly well with audiences. If you came to any of Dean's earlier talks for us you will remember what an entertaining speaker he is.
- Monday 8th November. Martin Lloyd – "Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies"
- Monday 13th December. Mike Jackson – "Directing the BBC's Antiques Roadshow" Please don't bring anything with you this is not a valuation session but a background and insight into the production of this very popular TV programme. Followed by Christmas Lunch.

More details about these meetings and announcements of future speakers and topics will be put onto [our website](#).

Christmas Lunch

It will be strange that on our first meeting back in October we will be taking money and orders for Christmas lunch. Kathie, our Secretary, will have it all in hand and the menu and costs will be put on the website in advance of the meeting.

Safety First for u3a meetings

The First Minister confirmed that from Saturday 7th August. Wales will move to alert level zero, Wales having the lowest level of COVID -19 cases in the UK. But with the virus still present (in my case currently resident) across the country it remains important that we all continue to look after ourselves and those around us. The committee's priority remains the health and well-being of our members, therefore we will be moving away from COVID 19 restrictions

cautiously. Every member has a duty of care and we will welcome back all members who have been fully vaccinated.

So we must ask you Please, Please make sure you are 'Doubly jabbed' before attending any U3A activity unless

- you have very recently had Covid 19 and have a high antibody level confirmed by a recent blood test
- or Medically you are unable to be vaccinated
- or you have proof of a negative test taken 24 hours before any face to face meetings

During meetings indoors, we ask that masks be worn unless medical reasons prohibit.

We will try to accommodate those who wish to remain more socially distanced from those not in their "bubbles"

Using Zoom for our lecture meetings

We appreciate that not everyone is ready to take part in large indoor meetings. It would be possible to set things up so that members can watch lecture meetings live from home using Zoom. Before we lay out money and effort on doing so I would very much like to know whether you would want to make use of such a facility. Please let me know if you would want to use this. If we don't get enough interest we will not pursue this any further.

If there is sufficient interest we will need a volunteer who is familiar with Zoom meetings to assist organise this at meetings. So will you please let me know if you would consider taking this on. You don't need to be a Zoom expert as help will be provided.

New Website for Llandrindod Wells and District u3a

Our [new website](#) is now live. The site has a new look, is easy to navigate and accessible from virtually all the different "devices": computers, laptops, tablets and smartphones. It is now easier to maintain with more up to date software underlying the operations. Please take a look if you have not already done so. A huge thank-you to Nick Talbott for all his work on the new website.

Training will be available for interest group leaders who want to maintain their own groups' pages, and Nick is on hand to help. Please take photographs of your u3a activities as it would be great to get some new pictures up there after being so long in abeyance.

It is disappointing that to date no one has come forward to assist Nick with the website and technology – we all need a deputy and bear in mind succession planning.

Borderlines

Margaret Mason, who has been our Borderlines editor for many years, is standing down. She writes

I have really enjoyed producing Borderlines. It is an ideal job, as I could do it in my own time, and it has enabled me to meet so many lovely people.

Borderlines would not have existed without the contributors. I couldn't possibly list them all, which underlines how helpful the membership has been. I would like to highlight a few, though, who have been super supportive. I am grateful to Nick for his good humoured patience when I have failed to come to a working relationship with technology, and to Kathie who has always been reliable and helpful. My thanks also to the late Alwyn Batley; Fay Ramsden; Tony Hodges; Mary Davies and Clive Barrett. I have worried sometimes that they have focused so keenly on getting me material, that their own enjoyment of the outing has taken second place!

Lloyd Power, our printer, has been fantastic. In the very beginning he pointed out to me that it costs the same to have one letter in colour as a full page, thus making it possible to have the photographs of group activities that have been such a feature of Borderlines.

It isn't just producing Borderlines, but also distributing the copies. I'd like to pay tribute to all the people who have collected Borderlines from the printer when I was unable to do so, and to those who have helped put the copies on the chairs.

Every committee with whom I have worked has been generous and supportive. I've never had a request for extra pages turned down, nor my decisions as editor queried.

I hope it goes without saying that I would be happy to aid the next editor in any way.

So we really need a new Editor to come forward if Borderlines is to continue. I look forward to a deluge of applicants ...

Interest Group News

Many of the Interest Groups are now operational and it really is encouraging to get so many positive comments from members who do appreciate all that the group leaders do and are so enjoying getting back together again. Please [check the website](#) for information on which groups are currently operating.

Earth Sciences Group

In the last newsletter I drew attention to a new Geology group. Michelle has decided, after discussion with Brecon u3a, to expand the Geology Group to an Earth Sciences Group. This will broaden the areas of study to climate change, astronomy/planetology, and environmental conservation, as well as rocks and landscape. Michelle is organising the first trip to the

Llandrindod Radnor Museum to look at the geology collection guided by Joe Botting. If you are interested please get in touch with Michelle at michelle@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk

Chess Network

There are a number of new networks which have been established because of the increased use of IT and Zoom during the pandemic which has enabled individuals to get together regardless of geographic boundaries. One such example is the new Chess Network which will start up this September open to anyone interested in playing chess no matter of their previous level of expertise. The network aims to encourage new chess clubs and players via Zoom or on line. The group can be accessed at u3aChessNetwork.org.uk

New guide for group leaders

As we do have new group leaders coming forward, we thought it about time to have a document which would help new group leaders and be available for anyone considering starting up a new group. I think it is also useful for any member who attends an interest group to read. The document is receiving its final consultation and "polish" and will be on the website soon.

National u3a news

I should remind you that you can sign up to receive the monthly national u3a newsletter to get news direct to your inbox. You can sign up at u3a.org.uk/newsletter. A few snippets from the latest newsletter:

- [Mathematical Surprises: A Curious Maths Quiz](#) – Thursday 9 September, 2pm
- Consultation on a new Digital Strategy for the Trust
- [u3a Science Network Meeting](#) – 14 October 10.30–3pm
- [Exploring World Faiths Events](#) – three sessions planned during Autumn

The current chair of the Third Age Trust Ian McCannah is retiring at the National AGM this month.

We will also have a new Trustee for Wales, Sue Shannon-Jones from Swansea u3a. Nick and I attended Zoom meetings to introduce Sue. It was very clear that Sue wanted a much bigger "voice" for Wales including the Welsh Language. The outgoing Wales Trustee, Chris Winner, will now chair the Trust's Learning Committee and continue as Groups coordinator for Trust u3a. Both Sue and Chris will be championing shared learning projects.

Aberystwyth u3a online talks

Barry Eveleigh's talk on "The Lost World of the Welsh Chapel" was fascinating. Thousands of chapels were constructed in Wales over the last two centuries, built as a result of a huge outpouring of religious enthusiasm. It is said that at least one chapel was opened every week throughout the nineteenth century. Today the opposite is true. Barry Eveleigh has been documenting the interiors of those chapels that have closed for the last five years, a

collection that will be stored in the RCAHMW Archives. Barry's live online event gave a glimpse into his work and the opportunity to experience the glory of these intimate and outstanding interiors.

A couple of the talks given by Nigel Humphreys during July are now available to watch on YouTube: "[The Paintings and Life of Edouard Manet](#)" and "[The Paintings of Kandinsky](#)"

Aberystwyth U3A have given thought to their Tuesday sessions. These will continue on an ad hoc basis only. The first such session will be given by Nigel Humphreys on Velazquez on Sept 14th, 10.30am. Please email Roger Boyle of Aberystwyth u3a to get the Zoom link for the talk: rogerdboyle@gmail.com

Updating your u3a contact details

Please let the membership secretary Janice Horne know if there is any change in your contact details including your email address. Email janice@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk

Book Review

This month's review is by Ian Paget of "Parson Harding's Daughter" and accompanies this newsletter.

Creative Writing

Group leader Kathie Richards-Jones has provided this month's piece, "How can we get rid of"

My thanks to everyone who contributes to this newsletter. Please do send me your news and other items for the next edition. I will continue with the Newsletters for a few months until we are fully settled back.

I look forward to seeing you at our October meeting.

Karen Latham

Chair, Llandrindod Wells and District u3a

U3A Contacts

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