



Llandrindod Wells and District U3A

Dear Llandrindod U3A Member

Welcome to our 6th newsletter!

U3A monthly and group meetings

The continuing Covid restrictions have put a stop to public meetings and this position is likely to continue for some time. I have spoken to the Metropole Hotel about their conference facilities. They are waiting for the next Welsh Government announcement scheduled for the 11th September. The Metropole will review their position on the 14th September, so I am afraid no news for now.

I have also spoken to most of the Interest Group leaders and applaud those who can and have continued to operate. Unfortunately many groups have had no choice but to suspend their activities and so the digital divide becomes ever greater. I rather like the Sunday lunch group where members are sharing their reviews of the various take-out and delivery food options that are currently operating!

As venues start to reopen and some indoor activity may be possible, some interest groups are considering holding small group meetings, with that all important element of social interaction. PLEASE check the National websites for guidance and complete the necessary U3A risk assessments and keep them on file, for without following these protocols the U3A Public Liability Insurance is negated. I am afraid this is extra work for the volunteer leaders running the groups, but it is necessary. The Risk Assessment information and model forms can be found in the [Advice section of the U3A National website](#) You will need to create a free login to access the Advice section if you have not already done so.

Experimental Online Monthly Meeting - 12th October

On a more positive note we have decided to try an experiment. We have considered arranging online talks for which we would have to pay, but which have the advantage that they can be watched online without need for any special software or equipment. But before we "buy" talks we want to try an experiment. We will choose a couple of good TED talks, which are free to watch and usually around 15 to 25 minutes long. Information about the selected talks will be published on the website shortly. We invite you to settle down on the 12th of October at 10:30am with a coffee and watch, possibly contacting other members afterwards to discuss the talk. It would be good to invite other U3A members in your friendship bubble to join you, especially if you are computer literate and they are not. We will leave the talks on the website for the rest of October and ask for your feedback after you have watched them so we can gauge the level of interest. If there is enough positive feedback we will develop the choice of talks and (who knows) even pay for a few.

Aberystwyth U3A online meetings

Don't forget there are also the Aberystwyth Zoom talks which several members are now watching and taking part in. All sessions commence punctually at 10:30am, but please don't try joining before 10:20am. The full future programme can be found at <https://u3asites.org.uk/aberystwyth/events> Coming up in September are:

- September 15th: Chris Simpson on "Geology seen on Cadair Idris": via Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81446450783?pwd=VktzVGJrWXBFejNDWkN4YTd5ZVNpUT09>
- September 22nd: "Poetry Pool" curated by Brenda Curtis: This will be a participatory session! To contribute, please send your name, plus title and name of author, to Brenda - brenlion593@btinternet.com by Sunday 20th September: please choose a short poem/extract to read/recite on any topic taking approx. 1-2 minutes. Hopefully, a theme might emerge to form a coherent and enjoyable programme.

Recruiting New Members- National Pathfinder Project

Our own U3A currently has 253 paid up members: a healthy number and nearly 3 times the number that formed the membership eight/nine years ago. Although a larger proportion of our membership than usual decided not to renew this year, many stating they are waiting to see what the situation is next year, I am pleased to report we have also had some interest from new individuals wanting to join. The latest member to welcome will be Roger Cumberland, who is also considering starting a Bridge Group. It seems we are still bucking the national trend!

Nationally the U3A is suffering from two recruitment problems;

- 1) there is a slowdown in individuals joining the movement;
- 2) the proportion of newly retired people joining is in decline, meaning that the average age of members is increasing.

It is anticipated the decline will be further exacerbated by Covid. The Third Age Trust has set up a recruitment working group. The first phase, "*Pathfinder*", will develop a recruitment toolkit. In the second phase, "*Trailblazer*", a number of U3A's will volunteer to use the toolkit and report back before the final phase - the release to all U3A's. The Trust hopes that all U3A's will undertake their own recruitment campaigns supported by the toolkit and by a national promotion and awareness raising campaign. The committee have decided to wait until the final toolkit is available and not take part in the earlier stages.

U3A National High Street Project

We have also been approached to take part in a U3A National High Street research project. This is a national U3A project managed under the auspices of the National Research Committee with Peter Cox, a U3A member with a retail background, supported by a working group comprising U3A volunteers of various skills and perspectives:

The project aims to record changes in UK shopping patterns, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. A report will be published in 2022 to help raise the profile of U3A in celebration of our 40th anniversary. The project will start with a quick survey in September 2020 recording the position since Lockdown began in March. Follow-up work in 2021 will research the longer-term impacts of the pandemic.

We need volunteers all over the UK to record shopping areas where they live. Following the registration period in August/September, volunteers will receive an information pack and full instructions in September so they can complete the initial survey by the end of September.

We don't know precisely how our shopping areas will change in the long term, but we do know the effects in many places will be dramatic. By the end of the survey, we will be better able to answer the specific question: How exactly has COVID-19 changed the places where we shop?

We have expressed some concerns to the organisers about the timelines, ultimate use and the sheer volume of information if the project wanders into historical and anecdotal memories. So we will stay focussed on the initial aim of recording what additional pressures and impacts Covid 19 might have on our high streets, starting with the baseline information of what is on our high streets now.

Karyn Wynne Evans has agreed to coordinate the project for our U3A and to complete the initial survey for Rhayader High Street. I will do Llandrindod Wells (a bit of company would be nice!). Do we have any volunteers for Builth Wells, Knighton, Llanwrtyd Wells and other local towns? If you are willing to get involved please contact Karyn Wynne Evans in the first instance karyn@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk or ring 01597 810313. To take part you will need access to a computer, a smartphone with camera or a camera which can be attached to a computer, access to a printer and possibly a scanner.

Individuals do have to register to take part in the project. There is an [online Registration Form](#). Enquiries to Michaela Moody, Lead on the project: michaela.moody@u3a.org.uk

Book Reviews

We had very positive feedback from the book reviews sent out with last month's newsletter so hope you will enjoy the new batch of reviews that comes with this newsletter. Have you read a great book recently? Please contribute your own review for the next newsletter. . You don't have to be in one of our book groups to contribute a review. Please send your reviews to Margaret Mason - margaret@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk

Short Story

This month we thank Jill Clay for providing her short story "The Couple at 27A". If you would like to contribute a short story of your own, please email your story to Kathie Richards-Jones - kathie@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk

The committee send their best wishes to you all.

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](#).