



## Llandrindod Wells and District U3A

**Dear Llandrindod U3A Member**

### Welcome to our 8th monthly newsletter!

I write this Newsletter to you on Remembrance Sunday at the time I would normally be at the Cenotaph reflecting on those lost in wars, the defence of our country and the thousands affected by the terrible consequences. At the beginning of the pandemic I felt almost angry at the talk of Coronavirus as a new “enemy” to be “defeated” using the language and rhetoric of war in the context of a virus. Perhaps I have heard the talk so often that it is not having the same impact. But I do accept there are parallels in the deaths, heart breaking decisions and terrible consequences both direct and indirect which are and will affect our country for a generation to come.

Listening to the veterans reading some of the most moving poetry ever written, it is with a sense of gratitude that I can look out of the window at the beautiful autumn colours and know I can walk in the woods, accompanied by our (new to us) one-eyed rescue dog. I know many of you are sustained by friendships, not all of the two legged type, especially when family are so far away and unable to visit. This is certainly a time to make the effort to maintain any and all those connections which give us joy of life itself.

### Scope for U3A Meetings as of 9th November

The regulations in Wales currently allow for up to 15 people to meet at an organised indoor event, or up to 30 people to meet outdoors. However such meetings are not allowed to take place in homes or private gardens. So it may be possible for some Interest Group meetings to restart, especially those which take place outdoors or for groups which meet in venues which have Covid precautions in place and are taking bookings.

For those groups that do decide to meet it is important that each member takes responsibility for following the guidelines: maintaining social distancing; hand hygiene and if possible wearing a mask at indoor venues.

Group Leaders must also:

- check and comply with the venue's Coronavirus risk assessment.
- complete a [U3A Risk Assessment Form](#) needed for Insurance cover and to ensure every action has been taken to protect the safety of members. The forms can be found on our website and are required over and above the Risk Assessment a venue may have carried out.
- record the name and contact phone number of everyone who attends a meeting for NHS Contact and Trace purposes.

While this may seem onerous we do not want any U3A member getting Covid-19 at a group meeting, a leader being fined for not following the regulations, or ending up in the local press for not following the rules or worse. We will give updates as soon as we know of any changes to the regulations.

## Monthly Talks and Presentations

The Committee has looked at a number of options for bringing you talks and presentations which could be accessed via the website and watched at your convenience. The idea was to change these on a monthly basis. In the last newsletter we drew your attention to two selected talks on the subject of Learning. The trial to see what the take up might be for these talks has I am afraid been a disappointing failure. Very few individuals appear to have visited the website page to see the talks and no feedback whatsoever has been received. So rather than committing U3A funds to online talks that appear to be of little interest to our members we have decided to drop the idea unless there is a clear response from the membership to the contrary. If you would like us to reconsider and arrange for a monthly online talk please get in touch.

I would direct any of you who do want to listen to lectures and talks to the [National U3A website](#). If you have not yet done so I also recommend that you sign up to receive the [National U3A Newsletter](#).

Aberystwyth U3A are continuing to organise regular online talks. Their website has [details of their upcoming talks](#) and some of their earlier talks which are now available to view on YouTube. Aberystwyth have called for members from other U3A's in Wales not only to Zoom in and listen but also consider giving a talk.

*"We are asking for any volunteers who may be ready to present for 30-40 minutes on any topic of their choice. We can provide any technical support that is required ... just ask! Please contact me with any ideas you may have."*

Anyone interested should contact Roger Boyle at [rogerdboyle@gmail.com](mailto:rogerdboyle@gmail.com)

## Using Zoom to host a group meeting

Please could any group leader interested in receiving coaching to enable them to host Zoom meetings with their interest groups contact myself or Nick Talbott. Nick has offered to help get us started not just joining a meeting but hosting them. Several of you have expressed interest in the last couple of months and we hope that interest can be confirmed and translated into new Zoom hosts and groups. Please also get in touch if you are interested but are not sure if you have the right equipment as we may be able to loan suitable equipment where needed.

## Member Focus - Isobel Wardley

We have an exceptional amount of talent with in our membership. Often individuals follow their passions outside of our interest groups. This month I would like to share the work of Isobel Wardley. Here are a few small examples .. these and many more are available to [see in detail on our website](#).



Isobel writes ...

*I first discovered the UKCPS (UK Coloured Pencil Society) at an exhibition being held at the NEC Birmingham around 2005, but at the time was enrolled on some watercolour courses being run by Aberystwyth University Lifelong Learning. When these ceased I was looking for a*

*new challenge so decided to investigate coloured pencil work as this was a medium I had never really used. I particularly like textures and shapes it seemed ideal. In my usual manner I thoroughly researched the internet and listened to various YouTube demos and bought several books.*

*I joined the UK Coloured Pencil Society in 2011. They hold an annual exhibition and I discovered that if you managed to get a picture selected on 3 separate occasions (different years) that you became a Signature Member. I decided this could become a goal to aim for. I was fortunate to achieve this after 3 years, so the next step was Silver status which meant another 2 successful years. After 5 years I was there! The next goal is Gold status which is 10. I've now got to 8 but its getting harder and harder as the standard required is increasing every year as professional artists enter from all over the world, together with my eyesight and dexterity deteriorating with age! Whether I make another 2 years or not is debatable, but as long as I'm able I'll try.*

*As far as I am personally concerned I just feel honoured to have a picture hanging amongst so many highly talented professional artists, and always enjoy being able to see their work for real. Sadly this year this was not possible due to Covid. Particularly disappointing as it was being held in Gloucester. Oh well, roll on next year - looks like I'll have plenty of time this winter to produce some more pictures!"*

## Welsh National U3A Short Story Competition

Margaret Mason, our Borderlines Editor, was selected as one of the Judges. Shortlisting has already taken place and the finalists will be announced during a Zoom event starting at 7:30pm on November 11th. I know from the standard of short stories which were published last year in "The Art of Creative Writing" and from those submitted to support these Newsletters we have the talent in Llandrindod and District U3A to enter and compete in these short story competitions.

## U3A Diaries for 2021

The committee have decided not to order any of the U3A Diaries for next year on behalf of members. Not because we fear there may not be anything to put in them, but because of the difficulty in obtaining orders/numbers from the membership and additional costs of posting out. Sorry if this spoils your collection! The 2021 U3A diaries can be bought in packs of 5 direct from the [U3A online shop](#) for £15 post free. Unfortunately single diaries can not be ordered.

## U3A Shared Learning Project

There is to be an open meeting on Shared Learning in the U3A via Zoom on the 20th November at 10:30am. If you are interested in finding out what Shared Learning Projects are and how we can engage with them please [book using this link](#).

## U3A Wales Network News

As Chair of a U3A I attended a virtual meeting called by the Wales Trustee Chris Winner with the aim of ascertaining the current activity levels and issues facing U3As in Wales. Only six chairs took part. Perhaps not surprisingly we shared many common issues: the "technical" divide of those who were able to continue some activity online, and those U3As where there is no activity at all; the loss of social interaction and the anticipated loss of membership when renewal time comes around. Aberystwyth U3A is one of the most active and is anticipating a loss of 30-40% of

its membership next year. It would seem with the interest groups we have active via Zoom, our website and our newsletters that Llandrindod Wells is more active than many.

One very positive outcome was learning that Scotland is setting up a network of smaller interest groups so that a critical mass of members across Scotland could make the groups viable. This was proposed for Wales with a working title **Zoom around Wales**. If it goes ahead it was suggested that there could also be a Wales notice board to link people up who could not find a critical mass within their U3A to form an interest group in the first place. This proposed development is one to watch as it could open up new opportunities for individual members and interest group leaders.

## U3A National Office News

You may see a change in the logo and strap line for U3A, or "u3a" as it now, following the National office issuing new branding guidance. There is also a new Welsh version of the logo strap-line. **learn, laugh, live** Introducing the new branding will mean some changes to the look of Borderlines and in time a new look to our website. The website software is now very old and does need replacing which would provided an opportunity to revamp our website. This is a big job and one, as with so much else, that will rely on Nick Talbott to undertake. Nick would welcome hearing from from anyone interested in helping develop and maintain the website.

## About our Newsletter

We do send out the newsletter to every member for whom we have an email address, but we also know that email systems may identify newsletters as "spam" and you may not always receive it. We always publish the newsletters on the website at the same time as sending them out, so you can always [check the newsletter page](#) for any you may have missed.

I confess that each month I try to "dodge" writing these Newsletters! The committee will not let me, and I was fascinated by the following received from Nick:

*... at least 96 members read the October newsletter. Keep in mind that some email systems block email tracking so the actual figure will be higher. Most readers view the newsletter several times. Our average reader has looked at the newsletter 4.5 times with the most avid reader looking at it 29 times over several days!*

I hope there is something that you will find interesting in this Newsletter and in the much appreciated contributions from members found in the attachments. And to that one avid reader ... **thank you** for helping me keep going ... whatever the reason!

Accompanying this newsletter we are pleased to include another short story, this time "My Back Yard" by our secretary, Kathie Richards-Jones. We also have another book review for you. Can I also remind you of the growing collection of quizzes and answers curated by Berwyn Woolnough that are [available on our website](#).

To everyone who has contributed to the Newsletters and the Website, my thanks. Please continue! All contributions from our members are welcome, especially those which strike a chord, make us smile, and allow us to share experiences.

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](#).