



## Llandrindod Wells and District

**Dear Llandrindod U3A Member**

Welcome to our December 2021 Newsletter (number 18)

### Introduction

I hope that your preparations for Christmas, whatever form they may take, are proceeding in a more positive and optimistic vein than last year. The lights are switched on and it is good to look forward, see people moving around and shopping, although with all the masks it is hard to see how many are smiling. What I can report is that Llandrindod Wells, in the annual National Survey of the best places to live in the UK, is once again right up there, although this year we only managed fifth places behind Hexham in Northumberland and Richmond on Thames. But we already know what a great place this is to live.

### Welcome to new and re-joining members

In October: Angela Yates, John Dore, Julie Jones, Linda Pickles, Paul Heaton, Ann Weir, Wending Wilding, Martin Harvey, James Davies, Wendy Isle, Suzanne and Edward Copland, Margaret and Robert Wood and Cynthia Price.

In November: Marion Saddler, John Smith, Jenny Bowman and Allan Simcock.

### Thank you

To **Doctor Karyn Evans** who for health reasons has tendered her resignation as Vice Chair. Karyn – all the committee will miss your guidance which has been particularly valuable in steering us on the best possible course through this pandemic. I personally want to publicly acknowledge all the support you have given to me and the valued friendship developed over the last two years. I will look for your face in the audience and hope for approval. Not getting away without one last Action, Karyn has already made the Charity Commission return for this year, one of the more important legal requirements which deserves a special additional acknowledgement.

I would like to introduce you all to **Margaret and Robert Wood**, who will be faced with the embarrassment of standing up at the meeting in December. Robert and Margaret have come forward to take over Borderlines our quarterly Magazine. Thank you both. As you would expect, Margaret Mason and Kathie Richards-Jones are doing all they can to facilitate a smooth handover and all being well we can look forward to a “mini” Borderlines in January. I loved the advice from Margaret to continue to include lots of photos (we love photos!) as members send copies of Borderlines on to family and friends who may have left the area. So beware ... photographs and copy will be needed from us all if Borderlines is to continue its successful life. I look forward to seeing how the Magazine evolves under new editorial control.

## Main Meetings

**Important Notice:** The Metropole Hotel is closed on 10th January, the second Monday in January, which is our usual meeting date. So the January meeting – a talk by Dr Andrea Hammel on The Kindertransport – will now be held on the 17th of January.

### Our November meeting

It was a surprise to everyone that on arrival to our last meeting the venue had been changed from the Spencer Suite to the Metropole Hotel ballroom. This was because we did mention to the management that it had been impossible to darken the usual meeting room for Dean Powell's talk on "Glyn Houston – A Black & White Actor" as the new blinds had not arrived following the refurbishment.

As it transpired the speaker, Martin Lloyd on "Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies" talked for over an hour without the aid of power point and most impressively without referring to any notes. The talk was fascinating, detailed and put across in the best of oral story telling tradition, illuminating in surprising ways the history and development of the passport. A document which allows the British the privilege of travelling the world, unlike so many countries passports which come with restrictions on which countries the holder may or may not enter "even for stopovers." Let us hope we will soon be able to put our passports to use more often than we have in the last two years.

Martin enjoyed the attentive audience and I suspect was gratified by the sale of so many of his books which, he informed us, is the only one written on the subject.

The audience numbered over 100 and we were concerned that the Ballroom did not provide enough room to space out and had poor ventilation or high noise levels if doors were kept open. We have made the request that whenever possible our future meetings are held in the Spencer Suite, so a shorter walk too. If for any reason we are moved to the Ballroom we will try and get enough notice to let you know via the website.

### December meeting

Our next meeting on Monday 13th December will be given by the Producer of the BBC Antiques Road Show providing a background and insight into the production of this very popular TV programme. Although for one of our members this will be "coals to Newcastle" as her husband was the Producer of Antiques Road Show for 20 years.

This talk and future meetings will be available live on Zoom. The link will be sent out by email a couple of days before the meeting. Initially we bought a licence for three months to trial using Zoom. The feedback from members has been very positive so we have invested in a Zoom licence for the next 12 months. and will aim to ensure that future speakers will allow us to Zoom their live presentations. Interestingly a couple of representatives from Carmarthen u3a will be joining our Christmas meeting via Zoom as they are also considering hybrid meetings in the future and want to experience before investing.

The talk will be followed by Christmas Lunch. All members are welcome to come to the meeting, but bookings for the lunch have now closed.

Can you all please ensure you register at the desk on the way in as this provides us with information for several reasons, most importantly compliance with COVID regulations.

### **Future meetings**

Here is the Programme for the rest of this year and dates for your new diaries:

Monday 17 January 2022: Dr Andrea Hammel – The Kindertransport

Monday 14 February 2022: James Cresswell – My Life at the Poles

Monday 14 March 2022: Brian Cullen – Radio Caroline – When Pirates Ruled the Waves.

Dates for meetings in the 2022/23 year will be 11th April, 9th May, 13th June, 11th July, 8th August, 12th September, 10th October, 14th November, and 12th December. Yes, we are going to have a meeting in August. We will be printing Membership cards with the programme for 2022–2023 and details for the new committee after the AGM, when subscriptions become due.

### **Christmas Lunch**

The orders have been placed for 96 people. Thanks to Kathie Richards–Jones who has undertaken all the administration in organising the Christmas lunch. I look forward to the quiz which is Nick's speciality.

### **Succession Planning**

Our u3a is thriving, and unlike so many other u3as we are not currently marketing Llandrindod Wells and District u3a, partly because we want to manage membership numbers during the pandemic.

It seems very early to raise the subject but we will need to address succession planning in regard to the committee and other important roles/functions within the organisation. All positions are open but at the AGM in March we will definitely need a new Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

And would welcome now, anyone prepared to become our Press secretary or Liaison person with the mid Wales u3a regional network.

I am raising this much earlier than usual so that anyone interested in joining the committee in any capacity can have the opportunity to sit in on a couple of committee meetings in January and February before the AGM. (Committee meetings are held via Zoom, so no need to leave home.)

New members may not think they should come forward but please do, after so many years a lot of us have served on the committee, run interest groups etc and we need new ideas and energy. Our current committee is brilliant but "time served." Those in their 80's (we have more than one on the current committee) deserve to step down and just enjoy being members.

## Llandrindod u3a bank account

The decision on remaining with or moving banks has not been taken as it was felt that the incoming Treasurer in March should have a say. Paper work would need updating anyway as the committee changes, and by then we will have 3 months of HSBC bank charges to review. We know that the timing is not ideal as subscriptions become due at the AGM and any standing orders would also need to be changed. So if a decision is made to go with Lloyds Bank is made an application will need to be made and processed.

## Interest Group News

I am more than happy to give out Interest Group news and updates at the main meetings. Please give me the information preferably in writing before main meetings commence.

- Meg Lewis has taken over Fay's **Sunday lunch** group.
- **Charabanc group** trip to Edinburgh Tattoo in August next year – 16 members have confirmed, 8 rooms booked. Deposits collected paid into bank and sent out again to the Travel agent based in Edinburgh.
- The **Craft** and **Photography** groups are increasing in membership
- As are **Rail Riders** and **Welsh History** group.
- The new **Earth Sciences Group** has made a good start. A trip to Lead Silver mines near Aberystwyth undertaken and trips to Cardiff Museum and Radnor museum planned before Christmas.
- The **Recorder Group** has met together for the first time, socially distanced of course.

## Regional News

Sue Shannon-Jones, the u3a Trustee for Wales, has draw attention to an initiative by the Older People's Commissioner for Wales – "Reconnecting with our Communities". The Commissioner wants to hear about your experiences of re-connecting with your community as restrictions have changed. You are invited to take part in an upcoming online focus group on one of a number of dates between December 2021 and March 2022. [More information here.](#)

## National News

### Website survey

A National Survey of u3a websites is currently being made, looking at issues around "SiteBuilder" which is used by around 50% u3as across UK and which the Trust is looking to replace. Other u3a's using a variety of other website systems and the survey aims to provide information to determine a suitable replacement for SiteBuilder. Nick Talbott is involved in this survey at National level. Will Francis assisted in replying to the survey on our behalf.

### New woodland

We have purchased 3 native trees as a contribution towards the new woodland being planted in the Brecon Beacons as part of the u3a movement celebrating its 40th year in 2022. The

site for purchasing and making donations to this project is now closed “as already more than 1,000 trees are on their way to be planted thanks to u3a members”.

### **u3a diaries**

Sorry we did not order any u3a diaries. Last year no one had anything to put in them and collecting orders and delivering to individuals was both difficult and prohibitively expensive. This year they wanted bulk orders before we had the meeting in October. The National office was also encouraging individuals to buy direct from the Brand Centre on the main u3a website, and that is a possibility for you if you really want a u3a diary. For me P&P is prohibitive. Hopefully next year things will be more stable and we can order in time.

### **The Chairman’s Liberty**

We are not supposed to promote or advertise anything other than u3a business. There are an unbelievable number of local and national organisations and almost as many members individual interests and passions all deserving of mention, support, volunteers etc. but from experience once you start it opens the floodgates so I can see where u3a is coming from. But occasionally this Chairman will take a liberty if there is something which might benefit our members.

**Age Cymru Powys** is helping older people in Powys who are in or at risk of fuel poverty through the Warm Homes service.

“We’re encouraging older Powys residents to make sure they’re claiming all the support they are entitled to, as many older people are missing out on money that is rightfully theirs. Our Warm Homes service will help you to keep warm and well in your home this winter.”

To be eligible must be:

- Over 65 years old
- On low income below £16,190 per year or in receipt of means tested benefits and /or
- Living with a disability or medical condition
- Living in an older or hard to heat property

Practical support includes:

- Replacing light bulbs with energy efficient ones
- Fitting Simple draft proofing
- Fitting reflective panels behind radiators
- Fitting water cylinder insulating jacket
- Providing cold alarms

For free advice contact 01597 825908 or visit [the Age Cymru website](#). The Home Energy Officer will visit or telephone to assess the energy–efficiency of the home and provide energy advice to help keep fuel bills down.

## A reminder about attending u3a meetings

We are once again closely monitoring government advice and will respond accordingly.

We must ask you to make sure you are 'Doubly jabbed' before attending any u3a activity and ideally have had the booster, unless

- a) you have very recently had Covid 19 and have a high antibody level confirmed by a recent blood test.
- b) medically you are unable to be vaccinated.
- c) you have proof of a negative test taken 24 hours before any face to face meetings. Free lateral flow test kits are readily available.

We respect anyone's decision not to be vaccinated but we must do everything possible to keep our members safe. So, if you have NOT been vaccinated or fall into one of the categories above, please respect the committee's decision and do not attend any u3a activity where you come face to face with other members.

We ask that masks be worn as you arrive and may have to ask that they be worn while seated unless medical reasons prohibit.

Registration will be taken on entry

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

The room will be well ventilated so you may want to bring out the "thermals".

Usual display/notice boards will not be used for the meeting, up to date information will be on the website.

## Creative Writing

I am grateful for this month's contribution "Anticipating Christmas?" by Kathie Richards-Jones which accompanies this newsletter.

As usual, any suggestions for improving these newsletters or contributions from members are most welcome.

## Wishing all our members a Happy Christmas

I look forward to the 13th December meeting and seeing you all in the New Year.

**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](#).