

Borderlines

Spring 2023



INTRODUCTION FROM THE EDITORS

Hello and welcome to our Spring issue of Borderlines

We would like to thank the members for their contributions because without your efforts we would not be able to produce an issue of Borderlines.

If you would like to join any of the interest groups all details and contacts are on the u3a website.

If anyone has anything they would like included in the next issue please contact us at email address borderlines@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk.

With thanks, Margaret and Bob.

Cover photographs from Ann Parkhurst – Garden visiting group

WELCOME

We would like to welcome the following new members who joined us in March 2023.

Alison Gallagher, Linda Bryan, Anthony Brown, Debra Brown, Carolyn Ashton, Lorraine Atterbury, Norman Atterbury, Inzz Lipas, Jude Sowerby, Francis Carpenter Frances Brown and Shirley Brown.

We hope you all enjoy your time with u3a.

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR RETIRING CHAIR – KAREN LATHAM

First, thank –you to all the u3a members and the committee for the presents received on retiring from my role as Chair of our u3a. The hellebores will go into the water garden area, these beautiful tough little plants promising spring and revealing beauty even in the cold and dark places in which they seem to thrive. The fig is more of a challenge but its new home is now located, against the house on the south facing patio, we have no house foundations so no problem there! As to that lovely red wine did we drink it or save it for a special occasion?

My time as Chair has been rather strange, standing up three years ago to accept the position and not standing before you all again for so many months during COVID. There were in total twenty Newsletters, which is ironic as I have no problem standing up before you all and speaking, but have to really discipline myself to write. Throughout it all, good and bad, I have had the support of the committee, which I hugely value and respect. The members who submitted articles, photographs, wrote wonderful stories and supported each other in so many ways during the pandemic will not be forgotten.

Our u3a is a strong and dedicated group, none more so than the interest group leaders, to have 23 active special interest groups and I learnt yesterday of yet another one starting up, is a real credit to the leaders and members. Our excellent website certainly helps with all the communications, organisation, policies and procedures required to run any organisation and group.

Llandrindod Wells and District u3a goes from strength to strength welcoming new members each month. I have every confidence that will continue, under the leadership of your experienced committee and new Chair Roger. Our u3a deserves its place in the Estate agent's brochures. Well done to every active member and advocate who contributes to that welcoming, learning and supportive culture. Long may we continue to have fun and enjoy all life has to offer together, perhaps time to raise a glass to the future?

Karen Latham- Retiring Chair

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR NEW CHAIR – ROGER CUMBERLAND

Hello Everyone

I'm Roger, your new U3A Chairman. I moved to Wales 50 years ago to take up the post of Assistant County Treasurer at Radnorshire County Council. I finished my Chartered Public Finance and Accountancy exams in 1971 and took over as treasurer of the new Radnorshire District Council in 1974, a post I held for almost 20 years before taking early retirement in 1992. I continued in employment, mostly part-time, until 2010 with my most interesting post being that of Acting Finance Director of the National Museum of Wales. My favourite painting, which I had to walk past every morning, was Renoir's "Blue Lady". Those were the days!

I still live in the same bungalow in Builth that I bought 40 odd years ago. My wife, Marion, died 4 years ago but I have resisted pressures to move and plan to "stay put". I'm currently President of Builth Wells golf club, but that 3 year term will come to an end on 31st March, leaving me time to take on the position as your Chairman. I feel very honoured to have been asked and relieved to find that I shall inherit a very capable governing committee.

Elsewhere in this publication of "Borderlines" you will find a full list of all 8 committee members, so if you have any queries or concerns, please just contact one of us. Regards, Roger Cumberland, email, rogerc@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk

CRAFT GROUP

U3a craft group meets on the 4th Monday of the Month at 2.00pm at the Llanyre Village Hall. The last two months we have made Birthday cards and boxes out of Christmas cards. Everyone who attends really enjoy themselves with lots of socialising with tea and biscuits. If you are interested in joining them please contact Jan Willsher at email jan@u3a-llandrindon.org.uk



YOUR NEW COMMITTEE 2023 - 2024

On behalf of the new committee we would like to thank the previous committee for all their hard work over the last year.

At the U3a AGM the following members were elected as your committee:



Top left to right,

Bob Wood - Vice Chair, David Wright - Treasurer, Roger Cumberland – New Chairman, Royston Blunden – Co-opted Member

Bottom left to right

Susie Corke – Committee member, Janice Horne – Membership Secretary, Margaret Wood – Borderlines Editor, Wendy Isle- Committee Member

Missing from photograph Nick Talbott – Programme Secretary and Web Master, Martha Wooldridge – Secretary.

Roger Cumberland	rogerc@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk
Bob Wood	bob@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk
David Wright	davidw@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk
Janice Horne	janice@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk
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Wendy Isle	wendy@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk
Nick Talbott	nick@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk
Susie Corke	susie@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk
Margaret Wood	borderlies@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk
Royston Blunden	roy@u3a-llandrindod.org.uk

All contact details are included on your membership cards and the website.

GARDEN VISITING GROUP

The Garden Visiting Group had an excellent 2022 season having visited and enjoyed visits to various sized gardens in Wales and over the border on the last Friday in the month, excluding August, commencing in APRIL with a visit to Westonbury Mill Water Garden, Herefordshire in brilliant sunshine preceded with lunch at the Gardens. The gardens had a lot of variety on offer is transported into quite a different league by the series of dotty and delightful follies the last edition being the water powered giant Cuckoo clock believed to be the largest in the world which was absolutely fascinating to watch.



This was followed in MAY visiting Powis Castle Gardens which included an interesting talk given by the gardener on the history of the gardens and a tour of the plant nurseries after which lunch was enjoyed in the Courtyard Café, Powis Castle
JUNE saw us in Carmarthenshire on a revisit to Aberglasney Gardens the group having visited there 5 years ago and was delighted to see how the gardens have been enhanced and improved since the last visit. Lunch was again taken at the Gardens.

Jubilee Garden



Sunken Garden



In JULY it was back over the border into Herefordshire on a perfect hot summer's day to Rhodd's Farm Gardens, Lyonshall. The garden was full of colour and has been beautifully designed by the owner, a garden designer, over that past 16 years and contained an extensive range of interesting plants. An excellent lunch, prior to the visit, was had at 'The Cowshed', Penrhos Court, conveniently situated to the garden.



It was to Herefordshire again for the SEPTEMBER visit to the St. Michael's Hospice Garden newly opened in September by garden expert, Monty Don. It is an inspiring visionary garden which was created by a dedicated team of volunteers and took over three years in the making. It is a 1.5 acre plot in eight sections which we understood will be continually evolving. We were able to explore each section and its aim is to provide a quiet reflective space for all those who spend time in it which we all found it to be in spite of the rain and wind that started up which somewhat ended the visit and hastened us to our lunch venue.

St Michael's Hospice Gardens



A very enjoyable lunch was then had at The Crown and Anchor, Lugwardine, before proceeding to the next visit on the way home to The Whittern Estate, Lyonshall, where we were made most welcome and we were able in spite of the rain to appreciate the surrounding parkland with the wonderful collection of unusual trees.

OCTOBER, the last visit for the year, was to Brobury House Gardens again in Herefordshire on a glorious Autumn Day being able to enjoy the lovely Autumn colours in all their glory that the gardens had to offer after lunching en route at Oakchurch.



An added bonus to the visit was a being able to obtain a 40% discount on all items in 'The Coach House Interiors' showroom situated near the house as the firm were moving to new premises the following day. Lovely quality bargains were had. In all, a great end to our 2022 garden visiting season with us looking forward to some more lovely gardens to visit in 2023.

SUNDAY LUNCH GROUP 2

The Sunday Lunch Group 2 is now up and running. They meet up on the 4th Sunday of each month. In January they booked in at the lake and had a lovely Sunday lunch. Then in February they had their Sunday lunch at Llandrindod Golf Club with sunshine allowing beautiful views over the lake with delicious food and lovely company.

WELSH HISTORY GROUP – REPORT BY MARY DAVIES

At our first meeting this year, having spent the morning studying the endless squabbles in Wales in Norman times, along the Welsh borders and between families, we enjoyed lunch provided by Liz and Derek Turner at the Thomas Shop. In the past, for our December meeting the group always joined a great crowd at the Commodore to have a festive charity lunch provided by the lions. As this lunch does not happen now we felt something was missing from our Christmas celebrations and Liz and Derek kindly stepped in to provide soup and delicious cheese scones. We all enjoyed ourselves and hopefully the atmosphere, as the level of conversation may show in Elsa's photographs! We managed without party hats and crackers and there were even some requests to repeat the experience!



U3a WALKERS, 23rd JANUARY – ELSA HARFLETT

On a crisp January morning fourteen of us set out from Dolafallen Bridge to walk to the Elan Village and Visitor Centre via the back lanes, returning along the cycle path. There was snow on the ground from a previous fall, which made the scenery even more spectacular than usual. Approaching the village, we passed the playing fields and then we walked beside the Elan River.

As we reached the end of the village, we came to the bridge which lies alongside the old bridge which is no longer in use.



Crossing the bridge, we made our way to the Visitor Centre and some of us ventured closer to the Caban Coch Dam, which was overflowing with a cascade of water, with the stone monuments in the foreground. Meanwhile, those who hadn't risked the slippery road towards the dam had found a snowman to play with! The group reassembled, and before moving on we studied the poignant statue which stands at the entrance of the Centre.



Our return route along the road towards the cycle track allowed us to look back across the valley and the river to Elan village. Continuing along the track we walked past Bethania Baptist Chapel with its graveyard covered with snow. Further along, as we passed the Elan Valley Hotel we looked across the fields as we made our way back to Dolafallen Bridge and the start of our hike. A most enjoyable walk, in stunning scenery.

U3a WALKERS, 27th FEBRUARY – ELSA HARFLETT



We set off across the fields from a lay-by near Ochr Lôn cottage on the road to the Elan Valley and joined the cycle path towards the Visitor Centre for a short distance. Leaving the cycle path, we crossed the Elan Valley road by the Dolafallen bridge, and took the track past Aberceithon. We turned right when we reached Pentreceithon, walking towards Penlone, and then turned left along the road leading to Rhydoldog House. From there we took a footpath leading up to Upper Ochr-cefn, where we paused to look back towards Rhydoldog Farm and the view beyond. Turning left, we continued down the road, passing the turning to Treheslog, and looking across Gwyn Llyn towards the mountain road to Aberystwyth. Our road took us past Parc Farm, where they were preparing for lambing, and just before we reached the Dderw Bridge we turned right past Tynpistyll and took the track across the fields, passing Tynpistyll Wood on our right, till we reached our cars again.

RAILRIDERS GROUP – THE CAMBRIAN LINE. CAERSWS TO PWLLHELI - 22nd MARCH 2023

Finally, at last. Yes we did it.

After months of thought preceded by failure, Blue Leader managed to book tickets for this much awaited and anticipated trip.

Back in August/September 2022 we were thwarted by planned rail worker strikes and then by planned engineering works brought forward to October and through to January 2023.

I was a young man with lots of dark hair before all this - believe what you like! So I kept checking at Llandrindod station with the lovely and very helpful Jackie. She assured me that line would be open and running in March. We had to get it done before end of March so we could use our bus passes to travel to get from Machynlleth to Pwllheli. The odd thing was that we had to pay from Caersws to Machynlleth. That is because the train originated in England. Then one day I attended the station to book our tickets. Guess what? The ticket office was closed until further notice.

Not to be outdone I went on the Transport for Wales App to book but you can only book 9 tickets at a time and there were 27 of us.

However if you rang a number in Cardiff for group travel you can book as many as you need. Several times I rang.....and rang..... and rang. Yawn.

I was on the point of going via the app but thought one more try and I got through. I got all the tickets, except one because we have a junior member in our midst but got that separately.

Stay with it, nearly there.

The tickets duly arrived and we all met up at The Metropole Hotel at the prescribed day and time. Weather dry but overcast and chilly.

We car shared to Caersws and arrived in plenty of time. Now, not to beat a point but the train was supposed to have 4 carriages - the front 2 splitting off at Machynlleth for the journey up the line. Guess what? No? Then I'll tell you. There were only 2 carriages. I told everyone to get on and I would sort it with the conductor! "Is this our train?" "Are you sure this is the right train?" Even my beloved was questioning. "Well, it would not be a railriders trip if nothing went wrong".

Oh yea of little faith. Of course it was the right train. Network rail made an executive decision to send the 4 carriage train to Birmingham instead but did not change the information board.

The conductor told us to get off at Machynlleth and wait for our train to arrive to go to Pwllheli, which we did.

The journey, if you've never done it, is picturesque and scenic. The train stopped at every stop on the line which gave us 2.5 hours to relax and enjoy what we saw.



The views of the coastline and the views inland were as anticipated. Our Borderlines editor tried to take a photo of Harlech Castle but the train going the other way blocked his view so have used a stock photo



Arriving on time in Pwllheli we were hungry, even though Blue Leader had supplied chocolates and finger biscuits.

In Pwllheli there are quite a few eateries and it was every man for himself for 4 hours.

It's funny but most of us, 26 out of 27 ended up in the same place - Wetherspoons. When I mentioned there was one quite a few faces lit up and said we might as well go there then.

When we walked in it was busy. I mean really busy. We couldn't get seats all together but we made ourselves fit into the spaces and had a really good time.

Some people eating in a Wetherspoons for the first time I believe. I think they might do it again.

Good food and refreshments combined are a well trusted way of enhancing a social situation.

After lunch was more testing as there is not much to speak of in Pwllheli but folk found their own paths and we agreed a meeting time for the journey back.

Now I know it is the same journey but a hill or sand dune does not look the same from both sides and we enjoyed different aspect and views missed on the way up.

A lively carriage with more chocolates and biscuits and plenty of tired people arrived back in Caersws. We didn't even have to change trains at Machynlleth. Bonus.

A long day ended with car journeys back to Llandrindod.

Here is my favourite bit - On the 23rd March the whole line was flooded and did not run! We were meant to do that journey.

However if anyone asks me to arrange a repeat.....



RAILRIDERS TRIP TO PWLLHELI – JAN SWINDALE

Swindales to Blue Leader 1,

Swindales to Blue Leader 1, Do you read me? Over.

Blue Leader 1 to Swindales, I read you, Over.

Swindales to Blue Leader 1, We have reached your objectives in Pwllheli and are calling from the sand dunes in a Gale Force 10 storm. Have you any further instructions? Over.

Blue Leader 1 to Swindales, Affirmative. I recommend you abandon your position and return forthwith to Wetherspoons and join the rest of the group for a cup of hot chocolate, Over.

Swindales to Blue Leader 1, Thank you Blue Leader 1, will do. What is our approximate rendezvous time for assembling at the station? Over.

Blue Leader 1 to Swindales, We will evacuate Wetherspoons at 17.25 hours and proceed in an orderly fashion to the station when the train will convey us directly through to Caersws in order to collect our convoy of vehicles and deliver our guests to the Hotel Metropole, Over.

Swindales to Blue Leader 1, Thank you Blue Leader 1, see you in 5, grateful for your organisational powers and tenacity in keeping your group in proper order, Over and Out!

