

The Phoenix

Brecon U3A



Summer 2015



THE PHOENIX

Summer 2015

**The Annual Magazine of Brecon
University of The Third Age**

No. 68



Editor: David Mitchell

Editorial Board

Elaine Starling, Jean Hosie, Trevor Jones

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The Editor

EDITORIAL

I have never edited a magazine before but the ethos of U3A is the learning of new things – so here we go! First my thanks to all contributors whose written and artistic work I have attempted to weld into this edition and to everyone who has helped in a variety of ways.

There are various versions of editing. There is the sadistic form where the scribbles of the tyro are totally rejected or reduced to three lines in order to meet a newspaper deadline, or there is a gentler sort where the addition of a comma is tactfully suggested in a manner that will not cause offence. I trust I come midway!

Another matter is the final choice of contributions. If ten good short stories are submitted but space and balance allow for only two, there will be eight people wondering if their literary career is finished. All I can do then is don my armour and say ‘Tough – the editor’s decision is final but please do try next year’.

I have to question and revise the standard of my own English but find myself sandwiched between Lynne Truss and Oliver Kamm, the ‘Blairite’ Times leader writer who thinks she should be exterminated. To place ‘correct’ modern English in an aspic of rules makes little sense as, if that had been done in Chaucer’s day, our writings would be very different – *‘I wolde han told yow fully ye manere’* in which I intend to edit! Kamm’s thesis appears to be that the understanding of English overrides the grammatical rules. There is also a strong feeling that the ‘Oxford’ language confers a higher social status in our still very class conscious land and there the matter becomes political.

Am I bovverd like? Well yeah! We learn to speak by listening and then go to school to be told that we are wrong. Rigid grammatical rules can submerge the style of an author, but I do support punctuation that echoes the pauses and emphases of the spoken word – which is why I put a comma before the above ‘but’.

Any written or spoken English that is clear and easily understood is *OK by me* (well appreciated by ‘myself’ as a reflexive and emphatic pronoun).

David Mitchell

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2014 - 2015

Earlier this year I introduced a morning session of U3A with the following comment made by a lady who died at the age of 102. Some years ago in an interview, she gave this clue to her 'longevity':

"You don't stop doing things because you are getting old, you get old because you stop doing things".

I think this statement could be applied to Brecon U3A members.

There is a vibrancy about our U3A which I am proud to represent. As members of the Brecon U3A, we can often take what we do for granted. It takes outsiders to comment on the high standards that we achieve.

It has been a pleasure this year to Chair U3A and I would like to compliment those speakers who prepare our internal talks. Their level of presentation and care of delivery, enhance the quality of this U3A and achieve a comparable standard with our visiting lecturers.

I would like to thank all the SIG Leaders for their diligence and enthusiasm whilst at the same time inviting any member who has an idea for a new SIG to speak either to the Chairman, the Vice Chairs or the Secretary.

You can read about each of the Special Interest Groups in this Magazine. However, I would like to specifically single out the Travel Group for comment as they have no independent report in this year's magazine.

U3A Members enjoy the excellent trips that this group organises. For many of us, their organisation and attention to detail has enabled members to enjoy visits to places which we either did not know or could not contemplate visiting.

From the Autumn Term 2015, the Travel Group will consist of 4 members, Ursula Younger, Jenny Hall, Deirdre Hemmings and Joan Millard. They are always looking for interesting trips and welcome suggestions for discussion.

The Chair of U3A and the Committee would like to thank Ian Ashton for his contribution to the Travel Group. Ian is now stepping down from this role.

The programme for this term looks very interesting with a series of themes which happened by accident. Gardening and Marine Craft appear to be the main candidates!

By the time you receive this magazine, this Autumn Term 2015 will have started and the Committee hope you will continue to give your support to Brecon U3A. Why not bring along a friend and introduce them to the many different facets of our organisation?

On behalf of the Committee, I thank all of you for making Brecon U3A what it is. Long may it continue!

Elaine Starling



Theatr Brycheiniog, the home of Brecon U3A, by Virginia Rowbotham



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Gadfly

Gadfly has always considered 'The Great Game' to be the historic jousting between Russia and the West but now he is seriously involved in one himself. There are many threats to the world of small insects, particularly the webs woven to entrap the unwary. The exploitation of the innocents is one thing that always sharpens Gadfly's sting.



Great monsters sit at the hubs of these webs, always watching, always recording, always ready to pounce. Their strategy is to own as much of the great information highway as possible and to fool or implant fear and guilt into their potential victims. This can be done by the power of the Sun, through a Mirror, by Telegraph or a clear Sky. Even small insect controlled organisations such as the Bee Bee See can be fooled into disseminating the monsters' demands. For the more consumer minded, tempting prizes such as a bite of a musical Apple or a Timeshare for life could be offered. Educational initiatives such as free digital tablets for every larva ensure entrapment in an Amazonian Jungle with no escape. Sometimes the Monsters adopt cunning disguises, cuddly and soft on the outside, caring and compassionate, but ruthless within. Some set up complex fortifications called 'Customer Help' where victims with a problem can be guided in ever diminishing circles until it is hoped they disappear.

There are of course a few Good Monsters, mostly young ones putting out tentative feelers to gather faithful clients without consuming them. Unfortunately they are often themselves eaten by bigger monsters who swell and swell until they explode in a cloud of nasty smelling corruption.

But hope is at hand all you fellow insects, Gadfly has found a way to aim at the heart of a Monster through the sticky web of the Great Google: www.ceoemail.com There reside the email addresses of every company chief executive! Gadfly has managed to sting three so far – good hunting and may the Swarm Strike Back!

Ursula Jepson 1922-2014

Ursula was born in Bude in Cornwall on 16 November 1922, the younger daughter of Norman and Irene Taylor. Her father was in India, where the family were reunited before her first birthday. Having spent her second Christmas in India she returned to Bude in 1924 with her nanny, to live with her grandmother Sarah Taylor. When she was 6 her parents came back to Britain and made their home in Brecon where her father, a solicitor, joined the firm of Jeffreys and Powell as senior partner. The family first rented and then purchased Ffynnonau.

In 1934 Ursula went to Sherborne School for Girls where she evidently shone, her sweet temper was noted as an asset to the school community. One school report however, voiced a note of criticism to the effect that she underused her power of authority. In 1941 she went up to Newnham College, Cambridge to read Natural Sciences. The war of course had an impact on her student days: she was part of the firewatch at the Fitzwilliam and in the summer of 1942, in what sounds like a very jolly adventure, she cycled round Devon with friends from Cambridge at the government's expense checking crops for Colorado beetle which it was feared the Germans might try to introduce.

After Cambridge she taught biology at the City of London School for Girls for 4 years, presumably harnessing that elusive authority when covering in very matter of fact terms what we now call sex education. She met Michael in London, and they were married at Brecon Cathedral in 1948. They had four children, and lived in Manchester, Prudhoe, Ilkley, Edenbridge and Newport, before moving back to Ffynnonau in 1971, where at the age of 50 Ursula found herself knee deep in full time farming. Which isn't to say that she didn't also tend her garden, continue



to dressmake, compete keenly (and successfully) in the Brecon show, cook, bake, bottle, knit, you name it.

Having attended appropriate classes she even reupholstered all the chairs and sofas in Ffynnonau. She walked the fields, tended the cattle, the lambs, the ducks and chickens, she cured hams and did the hard jobs like taking stock to the slaughterhouse and sometimes bore this heavy workload alone while Michael had to travel abroad.

In wonderful letters to her children she gave a flavour of her extraordinarily full life. One week she had spent an evening with Prince Charles at Highgrove, then the next day went on to an Old Mercers' weekend (Mercers being Michael's old school), two days later there was a family birthday party, and in that same week Ursula found time for meetings of U3A, the Cathedral Welcomers, the Mothers' Union, as well as attending her dressmaking class. In a similar letter, she was preparing for a flower festival at Llanddew - 'Wednesday we polish the church, Thursday the flowers are done, Friday, Saturday and Sunday we man the church and hall non-stop. I still have to make 4 large cakes, 6 dozen scones and 2 loaves of sandwiches for my share of supplies!'

A couple of weeks later, she was invited to a rather high powered women's lunch, and reported that she stopped the general conversation when she arrived and was asked what she did by saying 'Well, I don't actually do anything!!!'

This is Ursula all over, never fancy or highfalutin but taking in her stride the Generals across the playing fields and being presented to the Queen as representative of the Mothers' Union (she made her own sash of course, reading Brecon back and front, from part of a nylon parachute kept since the war).

Sherborne need not have worried - she had the quiet authority to help form and then for 3 years chair Brecon U3A and was particularly active in local history, though she also enjoyed classes in painting and photography as well as many other things. She wrote an article for *Brycheiniog* about the ironworks beside the Honddu. She became a Governor and later chair of Governors of Priory School where she was closely involved, helping the head with difficult parents (and one difficult governor!), listening to children read every week, swimming with them, helping on school trips, doing presentations on the Victorians and the Second World War: being heavily involved in education again nicely rounded off her working life. And she achieved all this with charm and modesty in her unsentimental, matter of fact way.

Once they were technically retired, from farming at least, there was time for a great deal of travel: Swan Hellenic cruises to the Mediterranean, the Nile, across the Atlantic, and holidays with their sons in Canada and the US, Kenya, Mexico, Ukraine, Dominican Republic to name a few. And in Mexico the woman who always enjoyed her food and her whisky in the evening got a taste for margaritas. On her return, she researched Mexico's history and talked to U3A about it. She lavished time on her grandchildren, cooking with them, reading, doing puzzles, teaching them to ride bikes and playing games which she hated but suffered nonetheless, and even bringing them to U3A meetings sometimes.

Ursula was a wonderful hostess. Her door was always open at Ffynnonau and she was great at coping with big gatherings and unexpected guests. She was also gracious, accepting and forgiving of the shortcomings of others, though no one was ever in doubt if she disapproved of what they had done. But she did have a sense of humour, right till the end her asides were witty, sharp and dry, delivered with that beautiful voice and that lovely smile.

Rowland Jepson

Editor's Note: In further memory of Ursula, a donation towards the cost of this magazine has been made by her family. On behalf of all our members I extend my grateful thanks and may her spirit of endeavour live on.



Rose by Peta Powney

THAT'S NOT ME

by Rosalind Davies



Is that me?
Edging down the bank
Probing the way with stick
And cautious steps
Surely that's not me.



That's never me
Stepping slowly down the street
Stick sounding on the paving
Exciting help from strangers
Scarf and dog leads tangling
Dropping purse and gloves
Can we hold your shopping?
Can we help you Love?



But no, they don't mean me
Not offering help to me
For I can swim a river, run a road race
Climb a mountain
Can't they see?
That old woman is not me.

Illustrations by Barbara Ellis

THE AGINCOURT WALL-HANGING

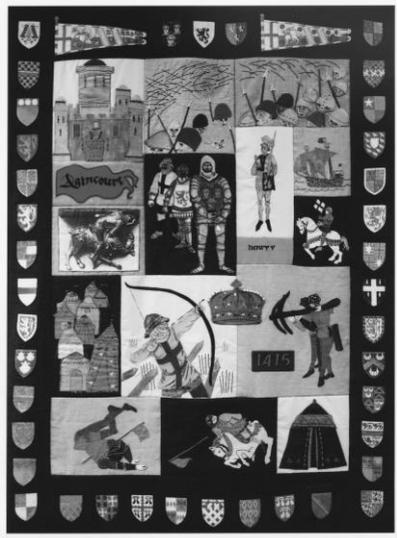
By Pat Woolford
Contemporary Craft Group Leader 2015

In 2013 the then Dean of Brecon convened a meeting to discuss and plan for the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Agincourt which would fall in the summer of 2015.

As part of the celebration it was suggested that a travelling exhibition be mounted for the duration of the event and that a piece of artwork be created for the Cathedral as a permanent tribute to the Welsh contingent in the army of King Henry V.

Brecon U3A Contemporary Craft Group was approached in early summer 2014 for the artwork contribution. We accepted the brief and decided to produce a wall-hanging. Research began and immediately it became evident that accurate details of armour, battle dress and trappings had become somewhat distorted by myth and legend over time, and much historical material had been lost. A contemporary work was planned but it was seen to be difficult as traditional images from artists of the time were familiar and distracting. However, it was felt essential to acknowledge those records and we chose finally to be guided by the original illustrations and carvings yet use modern materials and techniques and simplify the content.

As research progressed the design sketches took shape and assorted fabrics, threads and adhesives were purchased along with a vast quantity of linen for the background. Members of the Group chose from the sketches and developed and worked on their own panels, each developing her own individual style, the overall colour scheme of faded reds, blues and golds holding the work together as a whole.



The end result, an embroidered appliqué, four feet by six feet, is not without a little humour – Henry’s tough longbowman and two well-dressed effete French crossbowmen fight over the crown, while a delicate, ornate and rather vulnerable-looking Henry is supported by his three Welsh front-row hard men, Watkin Lloyd, Davy Gam and Roger Vaughan. The work has taken nine months to complete and is sponsored by Brecon U3A.

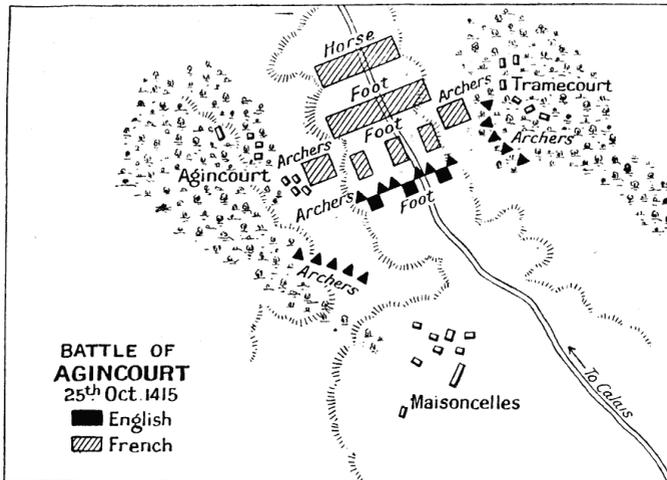
My sincere thanks to the Group for their enthusiasm and dedication to the project and its successful birth:

Joy Hudson, Lorraine Malham, Mair Morris, Eifiona Roberts, Corinne Thomas, Hugh Thomas and Sheila Williams.

Thanks also go to:

Brian Davies for information on history and illustrations, to his wife Marcelle, for contributing some fine Irish linen for special details;

My friend and calligrapher Joy Loveloc, for designing the authentic lettering “*Batarde*”; and to all U3A members who have given valuable support.



Editor's Note:...and I am proud to present the full colour version of the wall-hanging as our front cover!

THE WOODEN CASKET

A short story by Phillip Dey

My uncle Girija Mitra and aunt Basanti with their children moved to their new home in a village on the outskirts of Bhagalpur, a city some 200 miles north west of Calcutta. The house stood on a big plot of wooded land, about 3 acres in area. Aunt Basanti was the eldest sister of my mother.

Professor Girija taught mathematics at the University of Bhagalpur. His hobbies were astronomy and astrology but, with time, Hindu astrology became his obsession. That the position of stars, planets and sun could influence the lives of people, events and virtually everything in this world fascinated him. He became an expert at casting and interpreting horoscopes. In our extended family whenever a child was born Uncle Girija will prepare the customary horoscope and from it interpret the salient features of the baby's nature and future. All this will be written on a sheet of parchment paper to be given to the child when it reached the age of 18. Girija also advised anyone who consulted him, without any charge, on starting a business, building a house, the compatibility of couples before their marriage and so on.

We, the Dey family lived in Calcutta. My father was a lecturer in Physics at the St. Xavier's college. Father and Uncle Girija were good friends. When they met at our annual reciprocal visits they would spend hours discussing everything on earth. However Uncle Girija could not persuade my father to believe that stars can influence our lives. Although I must say some of Girija's predictions, especially death in the family were fairly accurate.



Several years passed since the Mitras moved into their new house. Uncle Girija started to have dreams about a child who apparently was buried in the grounds of the house. The dreams became persistent. Girija thought the best way to resolve the problem was to cast a horoscope on the dreams and make an analysis.

That he did. The analysis showed the burial place was about 200yds due east of the house. It also advised him to bring up the bodof the child by which act the soul of the child would be released and he will not be plagued by dreams any more.

Uncle Girija consulted my father who was dead against the proposed venture. Girija also consulted the high priest at the temple at Bhagalpur, who, a renowned astrologer, told him to go ahead. Five traditional well diggers from the indigenous Santhal tribe were called in. It was agreed to dig a well about 5 ft in diameter and carry on digging at least to a depth of 15 ft .After consulting the almanac the high priest selected the day and time when the digging would start. On the appointed day, the high priest blessed the spot where the excavation would commence and the Santhal diggers began their task.

On the fifth day of digging at a depth of 5ft the diggers struck something. Carefully the soil around the buried object was removed. It turned out to be a wooden casket about 3ft long, 2ft wide and 1 ½ ft deep. The casket was lifted out of the digging. The clinging clayey soil was carefully removed and it was given a thorough wash and clean up. The casket was made of teak wood and showed no signs of deterioration. The four sides and the lid of the casket had engraved scenes from the Hindu epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. Those present were for a moment overcome by the beauty of the casket which seemed to radiate a spiritual presence. After consulting the almanac uncle for opening the casket. My parents travelled from Calcutta to be present at the opening ceremony. The chief priest came on that memorable day, blessed the casket and opened it.

A wooden statue of a beautiful female child carved from sacred sandal wood lay in the casket almost filling it. A gold pot full of ash and a parchment paper roll tied with gold chain lay by the



side of her feet. A gold necklace inlaid with precious stones adorned her neck.

Uncle Girija unrolled the parchment. On it was recorded in Sanskrit language a short history of the child's family and the description of the illness which caused her death. The family were rich land owners who lived about 300 years ago in the same village as the Mitras. After the death of their only child they moved to Benares to get over their grief. The ash in the gold pot was that of the child after her cremation. A rather sad story.

The ash was sprinkled on the waters of the river Ganges which flowed near the village. The wooden casket with the statue of the child on it was given the pride of place in the lounge of Girija and Basanti's house. Girija had no further dreams. And he loved recounting to visitors the story behind the casket and the child.

Did the event convince my father on the merits of Hindu astrology and horoscopes? Not a bit. He went to his grave still believing horoscopes and astrology were nothing more than utter mumbo jumbo.



Last year I introduced a cat into the Phoenix layout. This year we have a very fine drawing of another cat by Peta Powney.

It might be good to have a cat every year as a magazine mascot – so who might contribute next year's cat?

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EARLY MORNING IN THE ISLAND FIELD

by Jean Hosie

The river glides beneath the trees towards the early morning sun,
a silver orb in a golden nimbus glimmering through the mist and
revealing an azure sky that promises a brilliant day.

As I walk a flight of mallard sinks to join busy dippers and a sentinel
heron on the ancient rocks just where the torrent sweeps through a
great curve to become a crazy white water, rushing to deep silent
pools.

The pageant of the morning is accompanied by a choir of robin,
blackbird, wren and chiffchaff filling the air until the sound almost
drowns the thrum of distant traffic – reminder of the busy world beyond.

At this early hour the privilege of this wonder is ours alone – my old
dog and I apparently sole witnesses of this particular moment of magic
this particular March morning.

The path, once a narrow track broadened now by indefatigable moles
and the daily parade of dog-walkers each with his personal timetable,
leads along the river bank past willows just silvering for spring, and
round plantations of birch and alder underlit by celandines and wind-
flowers - so pure on this new day.

The frost begins to thaw from each blade of grass and every twig
imperceptibly changing the mood at this early hour.

Such peace, each morning before the daily round of canine intrusion in
this valued place –a treasure of the town.



BRECON U3A ARCHIVES

by Gill Evans

When it was first suggested to me that I might like to take over responsibility for Brecon U3A's archive, I was very interested in seeing exactly what sort of information was held. I found the archive contained all sorts of documents and photographs related to its founding in 1984 and development over the past 30 years. There were newsletters, programmes, press cuttings, publicity notices, and details of day trips, holidays, and study days, together with minutes of committee meetings, AGMs and financial reports. I haven't discovered any disreputable secrets lurking in the files as yet, but I still live in hope!

As a relative newcomer to U3A I was amazed to see the range of activities provided over the years. There were concerts, craft days, geology field trips, visits to the opera, churches, gardens, gold mines, hill forts, lead mines, museums, observatories...clearly there's never a dull moment. I think we'd all better give up retirement and go back to work for a rest.

I was also amazed at the amount of mileage covered. Is there any part of the globe that Brecon U3A hasn't visited, I asked myself. From Big Pit to Bruges, Chester to Cyprus, Glastonbury to Greece, the Isle of Man to Italy, Liverpool to Lake Garda, Malta to Malvern, Naples to Northumbria, Paris to Pompeii and Skomer to Scotland - U3A Brecon have definitely got about a bit.

The subjects covered by the various Special Interest Groups that have existed over the years was equally diverse. From Armchair Travel to Art, Dance to Discussion, Gardening to Geology, Literature to Local History, Modern History to Music, Painting to Philosophy, and Strolling to Stargazing - the variety is endless. The range of topics covered is really incredible, although I have to say that I did find the existence in 2000 of a Special Interest Group on Revolutionaries a bit worrying. Luckily by 2012 law and order had prevailed and they'd been ousted by the Scrabble group. What a relief.

However it was the programmes which I found especially interesting. The list of talks given was fascinating. I found myself wishing I'd been able to join Brecon U3A years ago to listen to some of the following gems. "Rosemary and Derek shipwrecked with John" for

example. What exactly did they get up to on their desert island? Then there was “Oh calamity – it’s the Dean” “Bedlam and Brass Monkeys”, “Nobody told me my mum didn’t have turned mahogany legs” and to cap it all “Glider pilots do it quietly”.

As I continued to look through the programmes, I found myself spotting possible links between different presentations. I wondered for example if the talk on “Health care for older people – come suitably clad for exercise” might have led some people to overdo things, hence a later talk “Terminal care”. Then in 1998 more overdoing things after “Wine – some history and other bibulous thoughts” clearly led onto the cautionary lecture “Accidents in the home”. Another talk “Telling lies for profit” was presumably a sequel to an earlier lecture “Income tax – self assessment and getting tax back” Then in 1997 the instructive presentation “Improving memory” was obviously not sufficiently attended to by some audience members because in 2002 they needed a talk to explain “What is a painting?”

I suddenly realised that the programme planners had produced a joined up series of talks. So you had “What makes people happy” – well clearly, moving “From rags to riches”. “Surprise, surprise” led onto “The finding of a Saxon prince”. We also found out that the talk given by one eminent speaker wasn’t quite as well researched as it should have been. “Medical practice in the Solomon Islands” by David Johnson was quickly followed by “Dr Johnson got it wrong” My favourite linked talks though were “Some potty Victorian characters” followed by “May we recommend...members of the committee”.

So all in all I’ve had a most enjoyable time sorting through the archive. I now look forward to collecting future material to add to the collection, no doubt of an equally entertaining as well as informative nature.



AND THE COLONEL WAS LOST FOR WORDS

by Hugh Thomas

RG was training to be a chartered accountant in 1914 and was just 18 and half-way through his articles when War was declared. Like many of his generation he enlisted and in due course was drafted to France. There he went “over the top” and was lucky. He was offered the chance of a commission but declined, having calculated the fearful odds against survival as a junior officer. Instead he rose through the ranks to become Sergeant in the Quartermaster’s store (his accountancy training put to good use), effectively running it.

In that capacity RG one day received a message from the Commanding Officer, to the effect that a General was shortly to visit the Battalion, and he (the CO) wished to give the visitor a “good lunch”. The CO’s “wishes” were tantamount to a command so in the evening RG duly summoned his two battalion butchers and with them, set out in a GS covered wagon, taking with him a bottle of the rum ration. Their

proposed destination was the meat dump. This was an enclosure where animals were kept “on the hoof” to supply fresh meat to the troops, and naturally it was heavily guarded against theft – in this case by two misanthropic Australians.

The preliminary courtesies over, RG got down to business and offered to trade the bottle of rum for a sheep. The guards declined the offer, somewhat abruptly, and RG turned to leave. Then, looking back he told them that he really couldn’t take



the rum back to the stores and suggested that they might share it with him. "No hard feelings." This proposition was much more acceptable and the three amicably settled down to enjoy a leisurely session around the rum bottle. Meantime the two butchers got under the wire enclosing the dump, knocked a sheep on the head and dragged it back to the wagon, all without being heard or seen. The bottle emptied, RG took leave of the Australian guards, and with his two butchers made back for the battalion with cautious haste, their booty safely concealed in the back of the wagon.

The day for the visit came, and mutton was served for luncheon in the Officers' Mess. In due time the General rose to leave. Turning to the Commanding Officer he thanked him for a good visit and an excellent lunch. Then (one would hope with a twinkle in his eye) he said, "But can you explain how it is that this Battalion has meat on a meatless day?"



DOMESTIC VARIATIONS ON THE SAME HAPPY THEME

On Thursdays our U3A meets.
You have to be early for seats.
There's coffee and chat
And a talk after that
And the Bistro serves jolly good
eats.

Hugh Thomas

On Thursdays our U3A meets
For talks, conversations and
treats.
We learn such a lot
From the speakers we've got
But the drawback is very hard
seats.

Corinne Thomas

A CONTEMPORARY WASTELAND?

by Richard Walker

As I approach the biblical three score years and ten, I thought to take stock of the world as I see it now. It's not a new idea; in fact some of the best known examples of literature appeared as their authors reflected on the past and tried to envisage what the future might look like. For four years I lived just four miles from the birthplace of Thomas Hardy in the Dorset hamlet of Bockhampton, and became a fan of his novels and his poetry. Hardy was born in 1840 and was very much influenced by his mother who had a very bleak view of the world, advising her children never to have children themselves. None of them did! Hardy's last novel, "Jude the Obscure" is perhaps one of the bleakest statements on humanity to have been published, leading the Bishop of Wakefield, Walsham Howe to claim that he had actually burned a copy. One of the main themes of Hardy's novel was that the experience of children affects them for life, begun perhaps most famously by Charles Dickens in "Oliver Twist", and enthusiastically taken up by Charlotte Bronte in "Jane Eyre."

I was born in 1945 on the Derbyshire side of the River Erewash in a pit village called Grassmoor. Sixty years prior to my birth D.H. Lawrence was born on the Nottingham side of the river in a pit village called Eastwood. Like Thomas Hardy, who he greatly admired, Lawrence was strongly influenced by his mother Lydia, a former pupil teacher, who encouraged him in his education, and the necessity to avoid following the debilitating and dangerous life of his father who was a coal miner. Like his hero Thomas Hardy, Lawrence disliked the rigid class system into which he was born. (Hardy had married Emma Gifford, the niece of an Archdeacon who considered that she had married below her station. Hardy never forgave her family.) Lawrence took up the challenge, including the very restrictive attitudes towards sex in Victorian Society. Lawrence's last and (arguably) most famous novel "Lady Chatterley's Lover" began life in 1927 as the story of forbidden love between a gardener called Perkins, and his employer's wife, Constance. Lawrence rewrote the novel, changing the name of the gardener to Mellors. The book was banned because of its explicit use of what was and still is termed "obscene language," and of course the

very idea of adultery! I think the main reason for public disapproval was the inference that a man and woman could fall in love and form a relationship across the barriers of class.

Other authors have sought to represent the wastelands of their own age in literary form. In 1922 Virginia Woolf (nee Stephens) produced "Mrs Dalloway". The heroine, Clarissa marries Richard Dalloway, a safe but boring man, instead of Peter Walsh, who she secretly wishes to be with. Virginia Woolf was writing in the wake of what the literary establishment described as "two holocausts", namely the First World War and the great 'Flu epidemic which followed hard on its heels. Another character, Septimus Warren Smith is a war veteran suffering from shell-shock and towards the end of the novel commits suicide by jumping out of an upstairs window and landing on some spiked railings. Other themes in the book are same sex relationships (Clarissa reflects on her attraction to Sally Seton) and mental illness; Virginia Woolf was thought to suffer from what we would now term "Bipolar Disorder." Again, the authorities did not like it.

It is easy to think that the majority of literature is somewhat less than cheerful or optimistic. Whilst a student in Hull I lived round the corner from Philip Larkin who wrote a great deal about his own wastelands, but perhaps the most famous writer is the poet T.S.Eliot, who in 1922 published a poem called "The Wasteland", which begins with the iconic line "April is the cruellest month." John Sutherland (Emeritus Professor of English, University College London) opened my eyes to the real meaning of this poem, which I had to study at Salisbury College. Part 3 is "The Fire Sermon" which is really about a foggy, cold day in London with commuters heading into the "City." The commuters are



the "living dead" simply playing their part in the day to day life of the City. History is all around them, and to use Eliot's line, "death had undone so many" is a reflection on Dante's amazement at the crowds of dead people he saw in the "Inferno." Some may say it is a gloomy reflection on the fate that awaits us all.

Eliot, Dickens, D.H.Lawrence and Virginia Woolf, amongst other things were trying to tackle the question of how you mend a broken culture, knitting together the hopes and aspirations of the present with the traditions and (it has to be said) mistakes of the past. In the “Wasteland”, the poet Tiresias is the onlooker, doomed to live for eternity; he has seen everything, and he is destined to see it time and time again. Think of it as “Ground Hog Day” without a happy ending!

So how do I see it? Most of my working life was spent in the contemporary wastelands of big cities and the prison system. The task

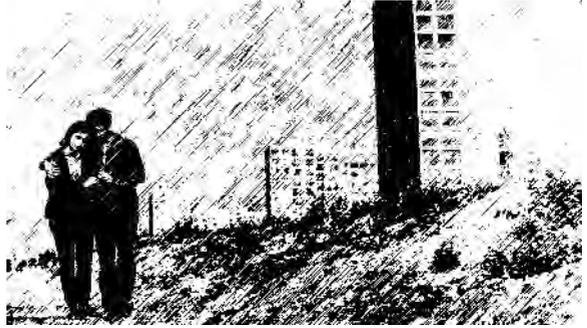


of the Police has always been to work alongside the problematic areas of human behaviour; crime, violence, exploitation, and abuse. Our prisons are warehouses full of people largely from troubled backgrounds, which was one of the main themes of Dickens’s “Oliver Twist.” (Ironically it became a popular musical!) I don’t seek to excuse those who have wronged others, but I do regret that

the “system” over generations has not succeeded in doing much to rehabilitate and educate those who have harmed their fellow citizens. Nor do I want to give the impression that no one cares; I have met and worked with many people who have dedicated their lives to trying to improve the lot of others, and made great sacrifices to do it. However, I do feel a bit like Tiresius, I see wars, poverty, inequality, cruelty and indifference, and sadly history does seem to repeat itself over and over again. According to recently released statistics, on average we are living longer in the UK, but like Eliot and the rest, I question how much we have really learned.

Judi’s Aunty Joyce, who is now 90, has discovered the answer. She has given up watching or listening to the news, does not read a newspaper, and refuses to discuss current affairs with anyone. If it doesn’t affect her, her family or Darlington Golf Club, she is not interested! T.S.Eliot recognised this trait in his poem “Burnt Norton” in the line “human kind cannot bear very much reality.” Aunty Joyce has succumbed! I guess we could say, “Well, that’s life” and leave it at that.” However, my final take on the question of life I discovered, again in the

words of John Sutherland. “Rather than try to escape, what Wordsworth called “despondency and madness” we have to drill down through the layers of pearl to find the creative grit at the centre.” So in my seventieth year, I am grateful for the company of so many interested and interesting people in U3A to accompany me on this exciting yet uncertain journey through a contemporary wasteland.



.....*and to cheer you up – a poem by Barbara Westerbury:*

I Will

No ghost me. I will ride summer breezes
 And be the susurrations in the leaves.
 I will be luminous with the full moon
 And float on high with fleecy cirrus clouds.
 I will hum with bees, harmonise with birds
 And hang with dewdrops on a buttercup.
 Most of all, I will live in a rainbow.

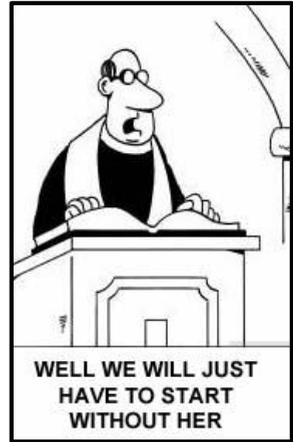
THE APPOINTMENT

by Linda Dainty

Early morning – a mad dash scurrying around. The dog walked. Everything cleared up and the house left in pristine order. I must not be late leaving today of all days.

The car is loaded up; the key is turned...NOTHING HAPPENS....Fortunately a neighbour has some jump leads and starts the car. Must not be late today of all days. Driving along, the scenery is stunning; the beautiful countryside in full bloom in the warmth of a summer's day and the car purring like a contented cat.

A gentle slowing down, a sudden stop. Not an accident according to Lynne Bowles on Radio 2, just long delays due to a build up of traffic caused by late-finishing road repairs. I WILL BE LATE! What can I do? Nothing! Ah well they always said, "I'd be late for my own funeral."

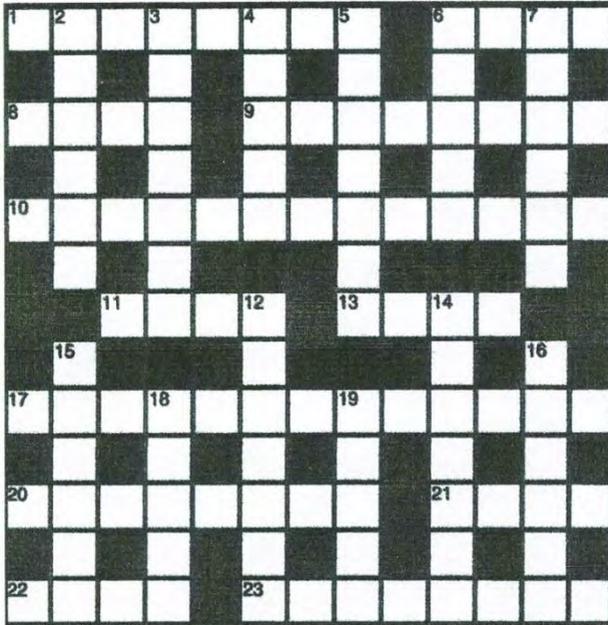


Brecon Cathedral by Virginia Rowbotham

CROSSWORDS

by Helen Thomas

QUICK CROSSWORD (Answers on page 60)



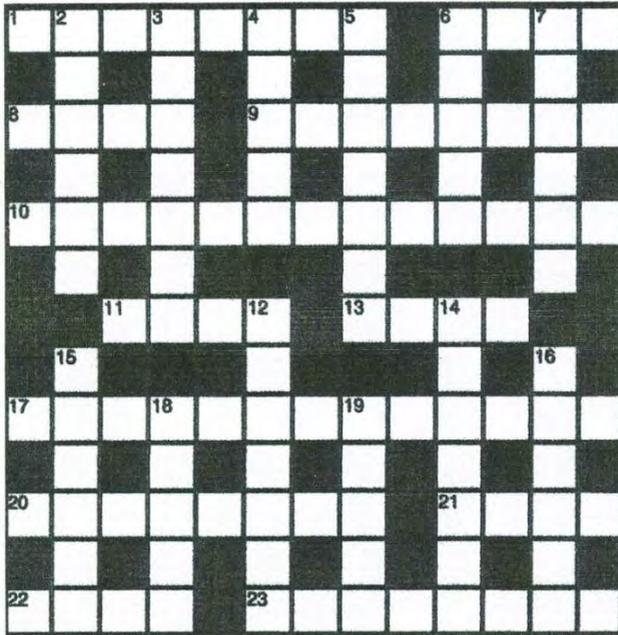
ACROSS

1. Extinct warmth? (4,4)
6. One of the two 'in the wood' (4)
8. Volcano (4)
9. Underground growths (8)
10. "Once more" (4,3,6)
11. The first of 10 (4)
13. Gradually loosen (4)
17. Musical Don Quixote (3,2,2,6)
20. Edgar Allan Poe story (3,5)
21. Small lake (4)
22. Makes a mistake (4)
23. One who bares all! (8)

DOWN

2. Lengthen (6)
3. Soldier (7)
4. One of the planets (5)
5. Sewing tool (7)
6. Penniless (5)
7. Whiten (6)
12. Energize (7)
14. Lawmaker (7)
15. One who takes a dip (6)
16. Heard at dawn (6)
18. Monsters (5)
19. He liked lilies! (5)

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. I'm between a vehicle & a loch in this concern (8)
6. A spirit loses its head, but becomes light (4)
8. Combine resources & make a liquid asset (4)
9. This is grand! (8)
10. 500 'dos' have a high-scoring target in between, to become entertaining (6,7)
11. Is this city an island? (4)
13. Turn in the lane, to have dash (4)
17. This amphibian's trouble may delight a hungry person! (4,2,3,4)
20. Flat aims will give no choice in life (8)
21. Capital team is royal (4)
22. It sounds as if you should plant this – give up? (4)
23. *INSISTED* (8)

DOWN

2. This state is More ideal (6)
3. This landslide contains atolls (7)
4. Hospital department for the monarch? (5)
5. So great to make room for your chattels (7)
6. Fool and space traveller have an advantage (5)
7. Tear and hesitate – to give to Caesar? (6)
12. More than one BBC could make some relations (7)
14. Sticks this place between notices (7)
15. You could make a mess of this! (6)
16. Appeals go to the east and satisfy (6)
18. A seafaring fowl? (5)
19. He could be American or Greek! (5)

The ANSWERS to both crosswords are on page 60



Y BYDDWN

A postscript to 'What's in a Name' in Phoenix 2014

John Davies has found information which satisfactorily concludes his investigations concerning the English meaning of his house name Y Byddwyn.

A man from Ammanford, which is a strongly Welsh area, was installing a new window and when John told him about his unsuccessful enquiries, he said I know what it means, "Y Byddwn is a South Wales term and means a Place of Rest or 'Cwch'."



John says that after twenty five years of searches, he is happy to have found the answer and to be living in a place of rest!

DYLAN and LAUGHARNE

By Trevor Jones

When Dylan Thomas left Wales for London in 1934, he's reported to have said: "The land of my fathers. My fathers can keep it," and he didn't return permanently until 1949. Yet he could never stay away for long, for it was chiefly in Wales that he could work, and the environs of Swansea, Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire clearly exercised a strong imaginative hold over him.

He returned constantly, to stay at his parents' various homes, in and around Swansea, and at Newquay, Cardiganshire, where he spent a year and which can lay claim to sharing in Thomas's inspiration for Llareggub, the magical setting for 'Under Milk Wood'. But of course, he also had a particular liking for Laugharne, of which he says in his radio broadcast 'Quite Early One Morning': "And some, like myself, just came, one day, for the day, and never left; got off the bus, and forgot to get on again. Whatever the reason, if any, for our being here, in this timeless, mild, beguiling island of a town with its seven public houses, one chapel in action, one church, one factory, two billiard tables, one St Bernard (without brandy), one policeman, three rivers, a visiting sea, one Rolls-Royce selling fish and chips, one cannon (cast iron), one chancellor (flesh and blood), one port-reeve . . . and a multitude of mixed birds, here we just are, and there is nowhere like it anywhere at all".

Dylan first visited Laugharne in May 1934, in the company of his new-found literary acquaintance, the Anglo-Welsh writer, Glyn Jones, and was immediately captivated by this enclave of Norman England, with its ancient charter, unique borough privileges and castle – later home of Richard Hughes, author of the 1929 best-seller 'A High Wind in Jamaica'.

Thomas's sense of wonder at the place is conveyed in his words to Pamela Hansford Johnson, with whom he was currently having a relationship: "I wish I could describe what I am looking on . . . but . . . I can never do justice . . . to the miles and miles of mud and grey sands, to the un-nerving silence of the fisherwomen, and the mean-souled cries of the gulls and the herons".

In a little over four years, Dylan would be married and a resident of Laugharne, for in May 1938, the poet and his new wife Caitlin moved into 'Eros', then a small, damp fisherman's cottage in Gosport Street, a home found for them by a generous Richard Hughes, who would also offer Dylan his companionship, use of his extensive library (from which an impecunious Thomas was allegedly not above filching the odd first edition) and – though probably less willingly! – the pleasures of a well-stocked wine cellar.

Hughes also allowed his young friend the use of his summer house, built into the walls of the Castle, and it was here that Thomas wrote several of the stories for 'Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog'. After three months, the Thomases moved to 'Sea View', a tall and dignified – though unfurnished – house at the 'posh' end of the town, which was rented from the Williams family, proprietors of Brown's Hotel, Thomas's favoured drinking haunt. The couple remained there until 1940, when to escape creditors, they retreated to Dylan's parents' home at Bishopston, just outside Swansea, and then to Caitlin's mother's house in Hampshire.

The war years saw the Thomases living – sometimes together, sometimes apart – in various locations, including Llangain, London, and Laugharne once more, courtesy of the hospitality of Richard Hughes's wife, Frances.

Dylan's state of health had rendered him unfit for active duty and he eventually found lucrative work on the payroll of the Strand Film Company, making documentaries for the Ministry of Information. Another source of work and income was broadcasting for BBC, beginning with 'Reminiscences of Childhood' in early 1943.

But Dylan was no hero, and life spent partly in bomb-ravaged London was not to his liking. Consequently, September 1944 saw him and his family safely ensconced in 'Majoda', an asbestos bungalow just outside Newquay, overlooking Cardigan Bay. His time here undoubtedly influenced his writing of 'Under Milk Wood', for physically, the town contributes in significant respects to his conception of Llareggub. But Thomas didn't stay at Newquay long enough to become as acquainted with its residents or peculiarities as at Laugharne, for his stay was cut short in dramatic fashion, when a disagreement with an army captain at the Black Lion, the hostelry where Dylan liked to spend his evenings, resulted in a shooting incident, and the poet and his young family were once more on the move.

In October 1948, Margaret Taylor, wife of the distinguished historian A. J. P. Taylor and friend, devotee and generous benefactress of Dylan's, bought the Boat House at Laugharne, specifically for Thomas's use, and in May 1949, after four years' moving between Llangain, London and Oxfordshire, the poet was resident once more.

His return to Wales appeared to offer Thomas a chance of happiness in the idyllic surroundings of the Boat House, perched between low sandstone cliff and the waters of the Taf Estuary - with what became the poet's iconic writing shed, a wooden hut, previously a garage, no distance from the house along Cliff Walk. Indeed, his 1951 'Poem on his Birthday' beautifully captures this environment:

*'In the mustardseed sun
By full tilt river and switchback sea
In his house on stilts high among beaks
And palavers of birds
The sandgrain day in the bent bay's grave
He celebrates and spurns
His driftwood thirty-fifth windturned age;
Herons spire and spear'.*



His first weeks back in Laugharne seemed promising, resulting in one of his finest poems, 'Over Sir John's Hill', which magnificently explores Thomas's familiar themes of impermanence and death as well as capturing the sights and scenes from his new home.

Indeed, initially, life in Laugharne was to Dylan's liking (more so than to his wife's, for Caitlin's bohemian ways, her drinking and public rows with her husband gained her a degree of public disapproval), and he quickly established a comfortable routine, in which socialising and drinking at Brown's Hotel and elsewhere were a prominent part, with afternoons spent at work in his writing shed. Sadly though, it was not to last, and while Thomas's period at Laugharne was productive of such masterpieces as 'Do not go gentle into that good night' and the aforementioned 'Poem on his Birthday', it was characterised by deteriorating health (his own and his parents') coupled with neglect of his work in favour of the beery, social pleasures of the town, and fears that his creative talents were diminishing. Significantly though, this period also saw the slow and difficult gestation which would ultimately

produce the work for which arguably Thomas and definitely Laugharne himself is most widely known.

The process by which 'Under Milk Wood' came to be created began at least as far back as 1932, when Thomas had mentioned to his socialist grocer friend in Swansea, Bert Trick, the idea of writing a Welsh equivalent of James Joyce's 'Ulysses', portraying 24 hours in the life of a Welsh town. Later, in 1939, after taking part in amateur theatricals organised by Richard and Frances Hughes, Dylan commented that Laugharne needed a play about itself. But turning these ideas into the play for voices we now have was to be a slow and difficult process, and one on which he was still working during his final, fatal visit to the United States in 1953.

Clearly, Thomas's portrayal of 24 hours in the life of the mischievously named Llareggub is the product of many influences, not least a lifetime's fond yet satirical observation of Welsh life and character, yet in its unique combination of the idyllic and the eccentric, as well as in key aspects of its topography, Dylan's enduring creation clearly owes a debt of gratitude to Laugharne and its environs.

Perhaps then it is entirely appropriate that, despite the undoubted influence of Swansea and other locations on Dylan Thomas's development as poet and writer, his last resting place should be at Laugharne. For it was here that his body was brought back by Caitlin from New York and taken to the 'Pelican', his mother's home in the main street – the Boat House would have posed problems for a coffin and bearers – before burial in St Martin's churchyard on November 24th, 1953. In August 1994, his widow Caitlin was buried here with him.



‘HOW NOT TO CELEBRATE A BIRTHDAY’

By Joan Stanesby

So there I was in Troyes (France) en route to Chamonix. I stepped from the shower, my legs went from under me on the glassy floor and I fell with a sickening thud on the shower step. Mary, my room mate, went to reception and returned with an attractive young man who examined my nether regions.

“*Etes vous un docteur, ?*” I enquired.

“*Non.*”

Who on earth has Mary brought, I thought! He had been an ambulance driver who had a smattering of medical knowledge and his verdict was that an x-ray was essential.

So we waited and waited.

Eventually the receptionist summoned a doctor who relieved me of sixty nine euros and only then was an ambulance called. Two ambulance men arrived and tried to pump up an inflatable mattress with a running commentary from our coach driver Ian who had been woken.

“Obviously,” he observed, “this has been checked on a weekly basis,” at which one of the ambulance men disappeared and returned with a much more robust pump. Still nothing happened and there was mention of ‘*une puncture*’. They then tried to lift me onto this still flat mattress while Ian lifted my legs to take the pressure of my hip. To him this was obvious but apparently not to anyone else. They then bundled me up and tried unsuccessfully to put me in a lift. I was three floors up!

When eventually I was transferred to a wheeled stretcher, I asked for a blanket but it seemed I was lying on it! We waited from 12.30 to 5.00am when at last I was taken to x-ray. When the staff asked for my date of birth they exclaimed, “*Oh c’est votre anniversaire!*”

Then followed nine days of emptiness. Nothing to read, no visitors and the frustration of my limited schoolgirl French. A doctor told me that no operation was necessary and I would heal provided that I put no weight on my leg.

Breakfast consisted of ‘*pain*’ – a chunk of French loaf or ‘*biscotte*’. I chose the latter – big mistake! It consisted of two cellophane packets of rusks which, upon opening, disintegrated and filled my bed with sharp crumbs. After that it was ‘*pain*’ with butter and jam and a basin of hot

C'est pour la Madame Anglais!



water (at least I had my own tea bags). There was also a small cup of milk which they sometimes put in the hot water!

I rang my son Giles and his wife Susie and they said they would chase the insurance people to get me home. Thank goodness I had a mobile phone – my only contact with English speaking friends.

The food after that came wrapped in cling film – bitter courgettes, luncheon meat and haricot beans swimming in water, a hunk of French bread, never any potatoes. There was hard and tasteless fruit with one amazing exception of strawberries and crème fraiche. Apart from breakfast I could not eat much and the staff put that down to my medication!

It was very quiet and the days dragged but fortunately I persuaded a friendly nurse to rummage through my luggage for the one birthday present that I had brought with me, the uplifting and funny book, 'Major Pettygrew's Last Stand'. I also managed to have a conversation with the lady visiting my room companion. She had a daughter who was a dancer at the local conservatoire and she showed me a video of this lovely 15 year old girl dancing – so lithe and graceful! On a later visit she brought her daughter whom I was able to congratulate and wish well.

My journey home was accomplished on the 29th May in a tiny plane that flew straight from Troyes to Cardiff. I was strapped in tight and on oxygen so could not see anything but sky all the way. There was just me, the pilot, co-pilot and a nurse. We were met by St. John's Ambulance and I was taken straight to Nevil Hall where Giles was waiting!

Editor's note: A remarkably cheerful and resilient Joan is in Brecon hospital at the time of writing (July) and she has asked me to take this opportunity to give a huge thanks to all the members of Brecon U3A and all the friends who have supported her through a long recovery.



WHAT A WONDERFUL YEAR FOR DANDELIONS!

by 'Brangan'

I think perhaps I say this every year – the end of April is always remarkable
For the profusion of dandelions – loathed by gardeners!

But to look across a dark green paddock or a roadside verge
That in the early morning shines with dew,
And later in the day see it carpeted with gold
Is to behold a wonder of nature.
Early in the day the flowers are closed
But once the sun comes through
The field is transformed with myriad golden blooms.

In 1915 Wilfred Owen wrote of the soldiers boots being "*blessed with gold*"
After traversing buttercup meadows in May,
But in April 2015 we are all blessed by the extraordinary vision of wealth
Spread before us – the colour enhanced by underlying royal blue ground ivy.

Beekeepers view dandelions in an orchard with some suspicion,
Knowing the bees will always forage those before visiting apple blossom,
For the wealth is not only in the sight but in the nectar and pollen
That make for wonderful honey..

And gardeners immediately think of all those airy parachutes
That will seed themselves for another blooming.....

SCIENCE – PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

By Margaret LLOYD

Listening to Martin Griffiths' fascinating talk on extinction reminded me that as 96% of the animals living on Earth during the Permian geological era were wiped out in the Mass Extinction event which followed, only 4% survived. I don't know how many species that represents, but that tiny proportion ultimately gave rise to all the animal species alive on Earth today (Several other extinction episodes followed, with further consequent evolutionary expansion). No species has evolved twice, so every evolution creates a new template.



There will inevitably be another extinction event, and in all probability another and another. Each will give rise to many new species. The permutations of animal design seem to be endless.

Life on earth is amazing; as Louis Armstrong once sang “and I think to myself, what a wonderful world”.

TIME PASSES

Psychologically, it feels as if time passes more quickly as we get older. Actually, because time on earth is measured in relation to the sun, and tidal forces between the moon and earth are causing earth's rotation to slow down, our days are gradually getting longer. During the time of the dinosaurs a typical day on Earth was 23 hours long, and the last true 24 hour rotation was in 1820. Since 1972 a 'leap second' has been added to our year 26 times.

Time in the UK is now kept by the atomic clock, which is extremely accurate. In order to synchronise our land based clocks with earth's rotation, on June 30th this year an extra second was again added to the day. I hope you spent it wisely!
(Source: Discover magazine)

ELECTRONIC WORLD

by Rosalind Pulvertaft

Plastic cards, PIN numbers, buttons to press, symbols to be interpreted, robot voices. Not an actual human in sight. Is this a new Ideal World? My wits are tested every day, it's almost a game of Snakes and Ladders. Great if you land on a ladder, a different matter altogether if you chance on a snake.

Take the other day in Galway when I really needed to go to the toilet. We were in Salthill, on the beach and it was a lovely hot day. The toilets were a new stainless steel structure, very neat and modern. But it was necessary to interpret the symbols: A Man, a Woman and a Child. It must be for men, women or children. Next I read the instructions: "Machine takes 20 cents. No change given"

An Old Gent is also reading the instructions.

"Do you understand them?" he demands.

"Not yet, hang on". I put 20 cents in the slot and the door flies open.

"Show me how to do it!" cries the Old Gent.

"I will when I get out, I have to go in now or the door will close again."

"I'm taken bad Ma'am, I'm taken bad!" The Old Gent pushes past me just as the door starts to close. Horrified at the thought of being shut in with him, I fight my way out.

Now I have not got another 20 cents so I have to put 50 cents in the slot machine outside the second cubicle. It opens OK and I go in still feeling slightly flustered.

Having used the convenience I put my hand down to feel for a flush button that seems to be below the seat. To my considerable consternation there is a 'Whooshing' sound but no flush. Instead the door of the cubicle flies open and there I am exposed to the whole beach and the full sunlight with my knickers down. Hauling them up as rapidly as possible, I clutch hold of my handbag and make for freedom. I just manage to scramble through but the door clamps my trailing handbag in

a vice-like grip. No amount of pushing or pulling will release it. I decide that I will have to enlist the help of my husband who is happily asleep on the beach and oblivious to the drama. He is not wildly amused. He inserts more coins in the slot but they just come out again. He fetches a metal bar from the car and tries to open the door enough to release the bag....not possible! At last however, he manages to move the door sufficiently to push the bag inside, thus hoping that we can open the door with a coin. We cannot. I consider dialling '999' on a nearby phone. Time passes. Then, when we are completely at a loss, a man carrying a mop and bucket arrives. Just a man. He opens the door of the toilet and gives me my bag



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BEFORE TRAVEL

AT GREAT ORMOND STREET

By Helen Booker

MEMORIES FROM LETTERS WRITTEN – JULY TO OCTOBER 1953

July 12th Tadworth Court. Last night was my first night on the surgical ward. Two children had both had an ‘op’ to have their tonsils and adenoids removed and, coincidentally, they both had something wrong with their hearts. One little girl was quite alright but the boy, aged eleven years, was very ill. He had to go back to theatre to stop excessive bleeding. When we arrived on duty he was better, but looking a ghastly colour and he needed a lot of attention. I didn’t dare leave him for long in case he pulled his ‘pack’ out. What with all the other forty children, quite a lot of whom needed treatment, we had a very hectic night.

August 1st Our hospital has been holding a dance tonight at the Hyde Park Hotel. Being on night duty and in a position to look out at all the cars beginning to come back, I can see lots of merry and happy people! It has been amusing watching them.

August 6th I did not sleep well as I am worried about the ward I am on. There are three nurses at night. The Senior Nurse (me) is on the busiest side, the Belt Nurse on the other side and the Junior runs between the two. The problem is that the Sister ‘hates, loathes and detests’ the Belt Nurse, who is, I must admit, rather clueless at times. Sister does not trust the night nurses as a whole anyway, so I feel in a rather awkward position.

The side I am on is very interesting but very tricky, as we get all the heart and chest cases. Last night, after the report, Sister suddenly asked me to get everything ready for a baby coming in as an emergency with a ‘Tracheo-oesophageal Fistula’. Not having dealt with one of these cases before I had little idea of exactly what to get ready, and was in one grand panic! After all my effort, when everything was nearly ready, except to lay out two sterile trays, Sister came to tell me that the phone call that she had had ten minutes earlier was to say that the baby was not coming in after all!

I could not help laughing to myself that she had let me carry on getting everything ready when even she knew the baby was not coming. It was very wise of her, for now I shall certainly know what to do another time, and with confidence.

August 18th I simply must tell you about a lovely boy aged ten who came into our ward yesterday. He has been in and out of hospital all his life with a 'bad heart' which is rapidly getting worse. His prognosis is 'zero' but his spirit is wonderful. He takes his condition so cheerfully and, instead of us cheering him up, he cheers us up!

I went to get a blanket to put around him during the night as it got a little bit cool and his hands were cold. About two minutes after I had put it round him and was sitting at the desk, he suddenly pipes up with, "Nurse, you didn't mind getting me that blanket did you? I don't like bothering you too much." As if I minded - I was speechless! When talking to him at one point in the night, I asked him if he had any brothers or sisters, "No," he says, "but I hope to have one on September 17th. My mummy is rather worried in case he or she has what I have got wrong with me, but she really shouldn't worry about that."

Fancy that remark coming from a ten year old.

August 21st There was an absolutely beautiful sunrise yesterday morning, one of the delights of night duty!

August 30th Did I tell you that we have a little boy in here at the moment who looks just like 'Laurel' of Laurel and Hardy? He is so funny too. Sister on her rounds the other night said to him, "Are you awake John?"

"Oh no," says he.

"Oh," says Sister, "do you talk in you sleep then John?"

"No, no, I don't, and I **AM** asleep," says he.

It amazes me how good these children are really – though naturally they can be just as annoying at times as they can be good. But one thing nursing has taught me is to have patience, and I need to go on learning that.

September 5th We have a fifteen month old toddler in at the moment who bellows at us when we go near him. I have never heard a child with such a loud and deep voice. We also have a gorgeous girl called Nicola who is ten months old. She heaves herself up on her feet and then stands clutching the cot side frantically, not daring to 'leave go', for if she does, she knows she will sit down with a 'wallop'. Her expressions are beyond words!

A perfectly heavenly morning. I wish you were here with me to see it. There is a crescent shaped moon and one lone star above it. The birds are just beginning to rouse – or should I say, 'one owl is'.

October 15th I have just been chosen to play Mary in the GOS nativity play in December. I am thrilled and honoured.

There is a poster competition for all the nurses to do and this is all resulting from the 'swill' which is sent from here at GOS to Tadworth Court for the pigs that are kept there. The title of the competition is: 'How Little Pigs turn into Big Pigs from GOS swill'. You see the other day some certain items were found in the swill which little pigs cannot eat! These included a pair of nurses' cuffs, an empty bottle, some empty drug phials and a broken cup – poor little pigs!

October 31st I have just finished working twenty one nights in a row!

SAVOURING THE MOMENT

*by Linda Dainty and inspired in Creative Writing
on the subject of 'Food'.*

I had died and gone to heaven,
Looking at that laden table.

The dessert came,
I entered paradise.
Savoured the smell –
The taste – the flavour.

In front of me,
As light as a feather,
Clothed by a covering of sauce,
As soft as eiderdown,
A splash of white running through.

I gaze longingly.
Slowly I spoon a segment.
I chew – I swallow,
I savour the moment.

That scrumptious, scrumptious
STICKY TOFFEE PUDDING



www.u3asites.org.uk/brecon

Have you visited the Brecon U3A website yet to find information on current events and activities? **Asks Kath Hopkins**

BRECON

WELCOME GROUPS EVENTS CONTACT LINKS GALLERY SITE MAP U3A

The **Welcome** page gives an overview of Brecon U3A.

Groups: All Special Interest Groups (SIG) are listed with details of meeting times. Those groups which appear in blue have their own page which is edited by the SIG leader. Just click on the group name for further information – some SIG leaders need a little more encouragement to start their page although those adventurous enough to have a go have discovered that the process is very straightforward. The Travel group page is particularly active giving details of all forthcoming trips. There is also the opportunity to contact a SIG leader via e-mail.

Events: The current term's programme of Thursday talks is listed on the Events page. This page updates automatically so you do not have to scroll through past meetings. The notes on speakers can be found by clicking on the link in the top right hand corner.

Contact: e-mail the chairman, secretary or website administrator via the links.

Gallery: Pictures uploaded to the website may be viewed here.

This is your website so your contributions and comments are welcome. SIG leaders who have not yet opened a page or have forgotten their log-in details should contact kathyhopkins@btopenworld.com to help make our website a first call information service.

SIGS Reports for 2014/15

ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE

Over the past year we've held eight meetings, all of which successfully met our three Architecture and Landscape criteria - (a) well illustrated; (b) interesting and enjoyable; and (c) promoting audience discussion.

Our Autumn 2014 programme covered: (1) 'Earth from the Air - Man's Inheritance'. The first of three thought-provoking presentations by John Bolingbroke showing the evocative aerial photography of French environmentalist Yann Arthus-Bertrand; (2) A selection of photos of Welsh buildings and monuments by Ian Wright - photographer at the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales; and (3) 'Three 10-minute landscapes' - short talks by Ernie Freeman (Drovers' markers); Corinne Thomas (The Wirral Peninsula); and Richard Walker (The Worth Valley - Bronte and Railway Children country). In the Spring term, Jean Hosie took us by video on a small plane flying down the River Teifi from its source to the sea. Delightful mid Wales countryside and no-one was airsick! Next, John Bell - local historian - showed us six favourite local churches and chapels. This included Brecon's stunning Plough Chapel with its wonderful Victorian woodwork and plasterwork.



In our Summer 2015 programme, John Bolingbroke gave his next 'Earth from the Air' talk on 'Man's Stewardship' showing how development has progressed in different environments. We then had a further 'Three 10-minute landscapes' from David Mitchell (Lundy Island); Pat Wilkie (The Hafod Estate, near Devil's Bridge); and the inimitable John Waterhouse (The Yorkshire Dales). Our final session was a double billing with the Gardening SIG on the work of garden planner Gertrude Jekyll presented by Pat Wilkie and architect Sir Edwin Lutyens presented by Mervyn Bramley.



Mervyn Bramley 01874 665267

Lutyens was probably the most prolific British architect ever with a legacy ranging from the Cenotaph to country houses.

We are quite informal and welcome new members. You don't need any special knowledge to join!

ART APPRECIATION



We have had a varied year. In the first term Corrine Thomas gave a stimulating talk about the Welsh born artist Merlyn Evans (1910 – 1973). His work had strong geometric, abstract and surrealist elements. The next talk was given by Mike Ingram on the American mid twentieth century abstract artist Mark Rothko who Merlyn Evans had met when he was artist in residence at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1967. In the second term Mike was given leadership from Jean Hosie and we would like to give our sincere thanks to Jean for her previous work and guidance for the group. Mike gave two talks on the use and history of colour in art followed by a talk on Holbein.

During the last term Mike gave a talk on the Beginnings of Linear Perspective in the Renaissance followed by an Introduction to Pierre Bonnard (1867 – 1947) a French painter who was influenced by the Post Impressionists and regarded as one of the greatest colourists of modern

art. The year ended symmetrically with Corrine who introduced the group to two mid twentieth century painters from St Ives, Alfred Wallis and Peter Lanyon. Wallis was initially a fisherman and scrap merchant; his paintings of ships were highly individual and admired by and influential to painters like Lanyon whose work moved around abstraction with powerful reference to the Cornish coastal landscape.

Mike Ingram 01874624493

ARCHAEOLOGY

Brecon U3A Archaeology Group usually meets 3 time a term though in the autumn term we met twice.

Corinne Thomas gave a superb talk entitled “Archaeological Landscape and Artists” in a morning session. This talk linked Archaeology very firmly to Art and The Landscape.



A further talk that term introduced members to the importance of The Walton Basin in the understanding and linking of early settlements in Wales, to Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age monuments such as Stonehenge.

This term, as part of another trip, Stonehenge was visited and the impact again on the landscape became clear.

Other guest speakers we have had this year include Dr James Berisford who talked about the Greek Antiquities; Phil Cox who updated the group about the Newport Medieval Ship; a talk on the Royal Mint with reference to coinage and a look at Hay on Wye. All of the above have added to our knowledge and understanding.

For the coming Autumn Term, three talks have been arranged. The first is by Dr Stephen Briggs on “Old Gwernyfed”, the second from

Nigel Nayling on Welsh Marine Archaeology and the third on recent Roman finds in Wales.

Throughout the year, as a group we were invited to participate in events related to archaeology throughout Wales, for instance St David's Cathedral Dig, Llanelli, The Archaeological Conference on National Trust Digs, and The Conference on Upland Archaeology. We take part in these events as individuals or in groups and any member is welcome to attend.

All U3A members are welcome to learn from our Speakers.

If you are able or would like to give a contribution to this group, please contact Elaine Starling (01874 711484 or email evstarling@lineone.net)

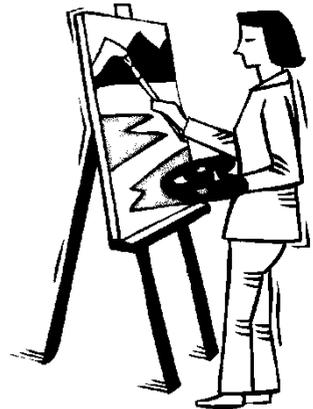
ART GROUP

Meets Tuesdays from 10am – 12noon
in Llanddew Village Hall

We are not tutored but are a very a friendly group who enjoy painting, drawing, sketching in a variety of media to our own ability.

Everyone is welcome so don't be shy, come along and see if it is for you!

Kath Crane 01874 658588



BOOKSHELF

U3A Special Interest Groups sometimes have strange differentiations. For instance we have both "Literature" and "Bookshelf". Where does one stop and the other begin, I ask myself. My own interpretation is fairly straightforward. "Literature" deals with books we have read or wanted to read in our youth and middle age. They are much loved and deserve a new look with older and more experienced eyes.

But "Bookshelf" is different. Brecon U3A's "Bookshelf" is based around twenty-first century fiction only. By definition this attempts to

bring our elderly brains up to date and to have a bird's eye view of the changes in social behaviour that have emerged since we were young. So often we shy clear of these because they are alien to our upbringing and even shock us. We don't always like what we read but at least we can analyse the literary style and appreciate the imagery. Sometimes our very antipathy towards what we are reading is so intense that it surely must indicate the power of the writing. Only very well written passages could engender such passion. Happily the "Bookshelf" group feels no inhibitions and our discussions are lively and interesting.

Sometimes reading translations of books that are set in countries that are unfamiliar to us allows us to absorb the atmosphere of foreign places through the eyes of their own citizens rather than relying on our own assessment as tourists. Choosing the titles is made reasonably easy by "The Independent" which hosts an annual prize for the best foreign fiction. This prize is shared by both the author and the translator.

Recently there has been a movement in the publishing world to censure the apparent "dumbing down" of prestigious literary competitions such as the "Booker" and to counter this the "Folio" prize has been added to the list based on purist principles of judging literary fiction. Fiction of this standard is recognised as a social force and this in turn stimulates the writers. 2014 saw the first award for this prize: it is a book of short stories by George Saunders but this year the book is by Akhil Sharma, an Indian from Delhi who has grown up as an American immigrant.

Another aspect of present day fiction writing is the place of the thriller and detective novel. So many of them include true descriptions of contemporary social behaviour which to the average Brecon citizen is alien. We need to be kept up to date. At the same time there need be no compunction to emulate such behaviour! I once heard an eminent critic of the day describing good thriller writing as "the modern morality play".

How about enjoyment? Do we enjoy a book for its content, its structure, its imagery? Or do we enjoy reading as relaxation and a pleasant way to while away our leisure hours? Whatever our attitude, may I recommend attendance at our "Bookshelf" slots in the U3A calendar



CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY GROUP

Any member of U3A is very welcome to join the U3A Christian Theology group which provides a rare opportunity, outside of academic study, for the exploration of contemporary Christian thought.

At present, the format adopted for the meeting is a structured discussion focussed on a recent Christian publication, currently Keith Ward's book '**Re-thinking Christianity**' - A book which aims to explore "the principle questions facing Christianity today". "Ward demonstrates that Christianity has always been expressed in constantly changing ways in response to new knowledge and understandings of the world."

The discussion is facilitated by various members of the group who take turns to lead the discussion and provide some helpful background notes.

Meetings usually take place on a Monday at monthly intervals from 10.15 am to 12 noon.

A new member, who joined the group early in 2015, has remarked that, "The Theology group whilst being both friendly and inclusive, has the particular strength that the membership is drawn from individuals with a wide variety of life and educational experiences".

For those who may have moved away from 'traditional' Christian teaching but who nonetheless consider themselves to be spiritual beings, this group should offer some 'enlightenment'.

Bryan Jones 01874 625063

CONSILIENCE

Theology, Literature and Philosophy.

In 1998 a book was published by E.O. Wilson with the title as above. It was concerned with the unity of knowledge; the title obviously from the verb to conciliate. I have the pleasure of being a member of three sigs groups, Philosophy, Theology and Literature, so rather than do three separate reviews; I thought to do them together.

Philosophy (from the Greek “Love of wisdom”) was once known as metaphysics; literally, what can we know after physics or science? Our concern has been with ethics; how should we live a good life in an ever changing world? The main driver of change is science, which alters the context in which you need to view a problem or state of affairs. Our Christian forebears left us a great legacy of knowledge, much of which was based on belief in God who was seen as creator of the universe, and intervening in the course of human history by the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Britain is now a largely secular society, so our concern in the theology group has been to re-examine aspects of the Christian faith. For example how do we view the idea of original sin in the light of what we know about human genetics?

In 1867 the Russian author Fyodor Dostoyevsky published “The Idiot”, possibly one of the most important books in western literature. The hero, Prince Lev Myshkin is the perfect man, kind, good and generous, but finds himself very much out of place in the St. Petersburg of Tsarist Russia. As Charles Dickens had introduced his novel “A Tale of Two Cities” as set in “a time very much like our own”, so this novel speaks to our own age. Prince Myshkin is confronted with the cult of celebrity, wealth, social position, fashion and beauty. Then, as now they were of supreme importance to the wealthy and titled members of society. In the background Dostoyevsky was haunted by Holbein’s painting of Christ in the tomb, which appears to offer no hope of resurrection. It is introduced into the novel, and acts as a focus for the ultimate fate of all of us. Lev Mishkin remains one of the most baffling and controversial figures in literature, but without U3A I may never have encountered him! Ethics and theology combined to produce a massive novel which tells us a great deal about our own age.

As you can imagine, we have not provided the world with many (or any!) answers to the myriad problems that it now faces. Our hope is that we are at least asking some better questions.



CONTEMPORARY CRAFTS

Having finished the Agincourt wall hanging in March 2015, a period of nine months intensive work, it has been a treat to embark on something more relevant to life today. So what could be more appropriate than to create interesting shopping bags. Using a combination of richly coloured fabrics, paint, embroidery and print, we produced some exciting pieces of work. A number of bags have been sold in aid of U3A funds.



Pat Woolford 01874 620885

CREATIVE WRITING

At the present time, The Creative writing Group meets three times a term. Its aim and purpose is to encourage members to express themselves in the written word.

Some very interesting writing has been produced, some of which appear elsewhere in the magazine. In the summer, we usually have a writing day. We welcome new members.

If you would like to join in, please contact Elaine Starling (01874 711484 or email on evstarling@lineone.net)

FAMILY HISTORY

More information has come to light in respect of our WW1 project which has delayed the publication of our book. Members have helped with proof reading and it is hoped that the book will be published in August. A report of our research into the fallen from Brecon in WW1 appeared in U3A Sources in September 2014.

We have looked at other aspects of WW1. Helen Brooker has her father's WW1 diary and she has painstakingly typed out his entries which were all in pencil. She read the entries to the group. It gave us a different dimension of what it was like to be fighting in that war. We heard from another member's great grandfather's diary of his life in Eastern

Europe in the 19th century before coming to the UK. Mike Ingram has told us of his research into his family in Birmingham in the late 19th century and early in the 20th century.

We have also looked at Workhouses and in particular those in South Wales.

New members are always welcome.

Pat Wilbud 01874 625410

GARDENING



We have enjoyed a varied year of garden visits, talks and exchanging ideas and plants. We held another successful plant sale in the early summer which was once again well supported. Thank you to everyone who helped, brought plants along or, equally important, bought plants!

An innovation this year was a Masterclass; a small group of us spent a great afternoon with Keith Brown when we learnt so much about a range of ways to propagate plants. We are hoping to continue with an occasional series of Masterclasses focussing on different aspects of horticulture.

My head is already buzzing with ideas of places to go and things we might do in 2015 – 2016. It is really special to be part of a group of people who share the same enthusiasm and the joy that is unique to good gardening.

Our meetings and visits are open to all members of Brecon U3A so I trust that everyone feels they could come along and join us in our activities; green fingers or specialist expertise are not requirements! A sense of wonder, fascination with growing things, an interest in the natural world and an appreciation of beauty are the only requirements, and for good measure a sense of humour! Oh yes - and our outside events usually involve feasting!

Pat Wilkie 01874 676425

GEOLOGY

Geology has lately become far more popular in general, probably partly due to more TV programmes. For U3A the emphasis is curiosity about the landscape. In order to understand it however, some basic geological facts need to be learned and that has been the emphasis over the last year. Future sessions will be on British regional studies to see how our amazingly contrasting landscapes such as the flat fenlands and high mountains have evolved. We are also part of the U3A South Wales Geology Group that run field days each month and Brecon members can individually contact the Secretary:

Yvonne Thomas: yvonne@lunn-thomas.fsnet.co.uk

You can also join the South Wales branch of the Geologist's Association for £10 a year by contacting the Membership Secretary, Mike Gregory, 01792 298510 or: membership@swga.org.uk They also run field days and winter lectures.

David Mitchell 01874 658296 david.mitchell24@btinternet.com

HILL WALKING GROUP

The Mountain Forecast was dire - a risk of prolonged snow later in the day with whiteout and high winds. We met at Tal-y-bont ready for our Wednesday hike over the Beacons but instead the Cafe beckoned (!) whilst we reconsidered and planned a lower route.



The wind blew us over the summit but, sheltered in its lee, we huddled down and ate our picnic lunch. And then the mist lifted. The sun gently warmed us, and we were treated to a vista of snow-capped peaks.

This is just one of our experiences this year as our friendly group of hill walkers (about 12 of us) have once again walked some of the best the Brecon Beacons has to offer.

We have walked more than 85 miles in total on our Wednesday hikes which have taken us over the Beacons, across the Epynt, into the Black Mountains and even to the Gower.

If you would like a walk a little on the wild side why not join us?

Alan Bloss 01874 636125 alanbloss@live.co.uk

HUMOUR

Humour is one of the less rigorously academic SIGS that seems to give pleasure to those who attend. Never quite sure who, or how many will turn up, it is not possible to devise a formal timetable and so each session stands alone turning on the personalities and their individual 'take' on the subject. It seems to be a recipe for a certain success given that members continue to attend and are willing participants, telling jokes, recalling funny incidents, sharing anecdotes and even writing their own scripts!

Jean Hosie 01874 610340

MAHJONG

Mahjong was set up at the request of a couple of members who had long wanted to learn to play. Two or three people had played in the past and were kind enough to tutor novices until it was possible to run two enthusiastic tables regularly my home. New recruits are very welcome.

Jean Hosie 01874 610340

MOVEABLE FEAST

Moveable Feast is a Special Interest Group for those who like to go out together for a Sunday lunch. Roughly each month we like to explore a new venue for an enjoyable meal and good conversation. Though a table is always reserved, the meals are not pre-booked so we are individually free to choose from the menu on the day. There are usually about 12 or 15 of us but anyone is welcome to come along so numbers vary and increase for our Christmas Feast held at the Castle Hotel, Brecon.



Well where have we been this year? Trying to keep things varied, we have enjoyed everything from the Victorian splendour of Caer Beris Manor in Builth Wells, or local inns such as the Lamb and Flag near Abergavenny and the Usk and Railway at Sennybridge to the homely surroundings of Pilgrims Tearoom in Brecon and the Drovers Rest in Llanwrtyd Wells.

So how are our venues chosen? Often, I am happy to say, from recommendations (always welcome) from fellow U3A members or if all else fails I resort to the internet. We have also made the occasional return visit.

Plans are announced three weeks ahead at our Thursday meetings to give everyone a chance to sign up so that I can book the venue.

Please give us a try, for we are a welcoming and friendly bunch with whom to eat and chat.

Eric Hollister 01847 638183

PLAYREADING

Playreading depends upon the availability of scripts and can be an unknown quantity until the first session! Contact with the Drama Departments in both Brecon High School and Christ College have been invaluable, and both are generous in loaning us texts without charge. The bookshops in Hay on Wye are of limited help in that they rarely have more than one or two copies of any play, although last term's experience of Shakespeare's "*Troilus and Cressida*" confounded that. This play unknown to any of us, proved entertaining and useful in bringing to mind tales of the Greek heroes. By contrast, in the summer term we read three short plays by Sue Townsend – from the sublime to the ridiculous but a hilarious and thought-provoking time was had by all whose skill at sight-reading and immediately falling into role never ceases to amaze me.



Jean Hosie 01874 610340

POETRY



The Poetry group continues with varying numbers attending - unfortunately it "clashes" with other subjects in which the members are also interested. The same format, which the members seem to like, still carries on - namely, a subject is suggested and it is up to the participants to find poems to suit the theme. Last term the subjects covered were "Friendship", "Birds" and "Castles," this last causing some head scratching to find poems which mentioned the word!

This term, the subjects are "Youth/children", "Ships" and "Places." It is often surprising how varied and amazing the poems selected turn out to be, and if

you do not wish to tax your little grey cells in trying to find a suitable poem, you would be more than welcome to come and listen.

On the whole, we do not take the subject too seriously, and we do have a lot of fun and laughter, which is always good medicine.

Joan Stanesby 01874 610738

SCIENCE

The science group meets three times per term on Thursday afternoons in the studio at Theatr Brycheiniog. True to the spirit of U3A, presentations are given by members of the group, with an occasional leavening of guest speakers. In the last year we have heard talks including the development of medicines, the history of electricity and the possibility of extra-terrestrial life!



The programme is displayed on the notice boards and on the screen display (this only for the two or three weeks immediately prior to the meetings).

Our topics for the Autumn Term include Science and the Environment and a session of mini-presentations on a variety of subjects. If you have any questions, please do contact me – even better, come and join us!

Margaret Lloyd 01873 810276

SCRABBLE



Scrabble Is an infuriating wordgame much enjoyed by those who do not have the opportunity to play other than at Brecon U3A. Two or three boards appear at each session and the competition can be fierce amongst experienced players who are also generous in

accommodating beginners or novices. Winners are entirely dependent upon luck and the fall of the tiles accompanied by a working knowledge of the veracity of two-letter words and access to the Official Scrabble Dictionary! A pleasant hour spent with fellow members who soon become friends over a game, or occasionally two, and generally ask for more sessions.

Jean Hosie 01874 610340

**I USED TO PLAY SCARABBLE WITH MY WIFE –
IT WAS THE ONLY WAY I COULD GET A WORD
IN EDGEWAYS**

STROLLERS



We have continued to meet monthly, usually on the 2nd Tuesday. Several new members have joined us and we are now about 20 on each walk. The October walk was along the canal between Talybont and Pencelli, November at Llangynidr. In December an historical walk around Talgarth was followed by a sumptuous Christmas lunch at The Clarence. Our thanks to Roger, Kate and the Staff. We are already booked there for 2015!

In January it was 'brollies up' for Pendre and the Promenade. In February we were on the Brecon Poetry Trail and our thanks go to Joan Stanesby for reading the poems. March saw us on the canal again at Brecon with some walking as far as the lock. My thanks to members who have led some of the walks and I am most grateful to Liz Benning for producing the notices.

Pam Hussin 01874 625275

STROLLERS PLUS



We have enjoyed a varied programme of non-challenging walks this year. We have been lucky that the weather has on the whole been kind to us and we enjoyed some good meals at local hostelries.

As I write this some of us are looking forward to our visit to the Gower next week. The Gower Walks began in July 2009. It was organised to celebrate the 25th year of Brecon U3A; one SIG's way of celebrating the Silver Anniversary. The Strollers and Strollers + groups were joined by many members of Brecon U3A who liked the idea

of a day by the sea and a meal with friends to as a tribute to an organisation that has added something special to their lives.

Seven years ago I became leader of Strollers and Strollers+ following on from Lucia East who had started the two groups many years ago ~ no doubt our Archivist could give the date when Strollers began and a little later the + group was created. Lucia was so happy that her two 'babies' were to continue and now I am feeling just as she did.

A couple of years ago Pam Hussin kindly took over the leadership of Strollers and it is flourishing. Now I feel it is time for me to pass on the baton and I am delighted that Kath Hopkins is willing to take on the role. I think it is the right for someone new to take my place and bring in fresh ideas.

I have enjoyed my time as leader, there have been so many positives ~ exploring different areas of this beautiful part of Wales, constant interest from the point of view of the natural world and the history of the region, also there have been some memorable meals.

Above all, I have appreciated the comradeship of the group; through participating I have met so many U3A members that I might not have encountered and they have all added to the richness of my life in retirement. So, a big thank you to all the members we have been a good team and will continue to be so with a new leader. My best wishes to Kath in her new role and my thanks to all the Strolling Folk who have been part of the group shared their friendship and helped to make a 4th Tuesday fun!

P.S. I am looking forward to continuing with the group and helping out when needed

Pat Wilkie New Contact: Kath Hopkins 01874 711848

**REMEMBER THAT WALKING IS GOOD FOR YOU:
PARTICULARLY IF IT IS:**

**INTO A PUB WITH GUEST BEERS
INTO A CAFÉ WITH CREAM BUNS
INTO A GOURMET RESTAURANT
TOWARDS THE TELEVISION TO SWITCH IT ON**

TRAVELLERS' TALES

I was encouraged to “*fly a kite*” and see what the response would be when “*Armchair Travel*” ceased to run and was pleased to find eight or ten members happy to come along and talk about experiences away from home. There is no place for technology and only the occasional photograph or artefact is produced, so that everyone simply describes in their own words places they have visited or lived in, bringing their experiences to life for their listeners. Visits to Yemen and Ethiopia, to China, to Iceland, residence in Japan, New Zealand and various parts of America as well as both ocean and river cruising have delighted members, together with fond memories of family holidays throughout Europe and the UK. It seems a good way to allow members the vicarious pleasure of both national and international travel without the hassle of actually coping with airports and railway stations!

Jean Hosie 01874 610340



CROSSWORD ANSWERS

QUICK CROSSWORD

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. Dead heat
6. Babe
8. Etna
9. Rhizomes
10. Unto the breach
11. Once
13. Ease
17. Man of La Mancha
20. The Raven
21. Tarn
22. Errs
23. Naturist

DOWN

2. Extend
3. Dragoon
4. Earth
5. Thimble
6. Broke
7. Bleach
12. Enliven
14. Senator
15. Bather
16. Chorus
18. Ogres
19. Monet

ACROSS

1. Business
6. Airy
8. Pool
9. Thousand
10. Dinner Parties
11. Isla17
13. Elan
17. Toad in the hole
20. Fatalism
21. Real
22. Cede
23. Stressed

DOWN

2. Utopia
3. Islands
4. Enter
5. Storage
6. Asset
7. Render
12. Aunties
14. Adheres
15. Potage
16. Please
18. Drake
19. Homer

HOW TO BE A GOOD U3A MEMBER:

ALWAYS PAY YOUR YEARLY
SUBSCRIPTION ON TIME

ALWAYS NOTIFY THE MEMBERSHIP
SECRETARY OF ANY CHANGE OF
ADDRESS DETAILS

ALWAYS PAY YOUR £1 FOR THE
DAY EVEN IF YOU ONLY COME IN
THE MORNING OR AFTERNOON

ALWAYS WEAR YOUR NAME BADGE

ALWAYS PAY FOR TRAVEL EVENTS WELL BEFORE THE
DEADLINE

ALWAYS INFORM THE ORGANISER PROMPTLY IF YOU HAVE
TO CANCEL FOR ANY EVENT

KEEP AN EYE ON OUR WEBSITE [SEE PAGE 43]

ALWAYS VOLUNTEER FOR SOMETHING IF YOU CAN

START A NEW SPECIAL IN INTEREST GROUP

RECRUIT A NEW MEMBER

HELP AND ENCOURAGE ANY DISABLED MEMBERS

LET THE COMMITTEE HAVE YOUR FEEDBACK OF IDEAS

FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING NOTICES

BE GRATEFUL TO THE THEATR STAFF WHO HELP US

BE TOLERANT OF THE ODD MISTAKE

ENJOY YOURSELF!



PHOENIX 2016

EDITOR'S NOTE

I hope that you have enjoyed this edition of Phoenix. I have enjoyed putting it together on a computer that is both friend and enemy! The task is quite onerous but some indoor enforcement due to bad weather has helped it along. In order to enjoy success next year I would be very grateful indeed if contributors could help as much as possible by starting **NOW**, for winter is soon upon us and is an ideal time for written and graphic endeavour. It would be just great if a proportion was in by Christmas so the layouts can get underway. I regret that I need to impose deadlines so that things can proceed smoothly.

All creative work should be submitted by the end of the spring term and all reports by 30th May. The aim is to have the magazine 'print ready' before the summer holidays when contact becomes more difficult.

The format of submissions may be hand written for retyping but if you are submitting by computer the ideal is in 'word' with Arial 11 font on A5 page layout – that will enable you to see what your contribution will look like. Graphic work, except for the cover, can only be in greyscale for reasons of economy, but I can modify from coloured pictures and resize as required. Written contributions should not exceed 1000 words and SIG reports 150. Short anecdotes, poems, cartoons, puzzles, etc. are very welcome.

Contributions may be in person on paper, by email to david.mitchell24@btinternet.com, disc, or memory stick to the U3A computer. All graphic work will be returned after scanning.

COVER COMPETITION

We have had two splendid covers for our recent editions and the current format should perhaps continue. Here is the opportunity for full colour [suitable for reduction to A5 portrait format] – so 'go for it' all you artists and designers!