

# Pontyclun U3A Newsletter

Issue 17: June – September 2020

I asked in these strange and challenging times for contributions to produce a positive and uplifting newsletter for June. Members have shared what has helped them to get through the trials of the last weeks. I hope you enjoy their contributions.

Sheila Gifford

## The Great outdoors

During the quieter days of lockdown those of us who have been able to get out in our gardens and the surrounding countryside have enjoyed the wildlife and animals



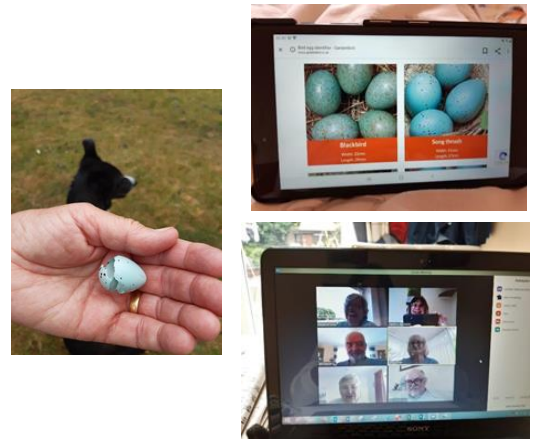
## Using Social Media

Members have embraced new technology with groups meeting on zoom . Pontyclun's U3a has had committee meetings using it and there have been several successful and fun virtual coffee morning hosted by Sharon our secretary and the Birdwatchers have met virtually.



## Bird Watching Group

Some of us from the birdwatching group have been having weekly virtual coffee mornings via Zoom. We do have a tendency to all try to talk at once, but we have a laugh and even sometimes talk about birds! Phil won the prize for knowing that the eggshell that Glen and I found on a socially distanced walk, was that of a song thrush. It's just great to be able to see one another in real time even if we can't meet up.



## Members Personal Experiences

One of the things that has brought me huge pleasure is for the first time I entered my dog into Miskin online dog show and he won 2nd and 5th in best small breed and funny photo section. I would not have done this ordinarily but with time to spare, why not?

His name is Brock and he is a miniature dachshund. He is about 19 months old and a real character. He is full of mischief and loves chasing his ball around the garden. He also is very loving and makes every day better.

He makes us laugh so much!!!



Alyson Price

## Being Creative

I am sure many of us have turned to making to keep us occupied over the past weeks. I have knitted a large Aran rug for my daughter's new home. Jessie James baked this super Simnel cake for Easter and has continued her baking through lockdown. Anne Abel has made a delightful contribution to the fairy population of Cross Inn by making needle felt fairies and put them in the trees in the local wood. She has posted daily to



Facebook a photograph of a flower in her garden with commentary that is receiving positive feedback and spreading a little daily joy. She has also been decorating her windows with drawings of rainbows, caterpillars, flowers, parrots and in front garden dinosaurs in pot plants for local children to enjoy

Anne said, "All these have helped to keep me connected with the world outside my house and garden."



## A Good Read

Reading has been my salvation. I'm now on my 12th book. It has been great to be able to finally get around to reading books I have had for ages. I would recommend Prue Leith's autobiography "Relish" "what an exciting and interesting life she has had. I was also given a subscription for my birthday in May for Rare Bird's book club (nothing to do with birds) which I would recommend to any avid reader.



All female writers, go online and have a look

Nature has come alive which is wonderful. Walking most days in Ivor Woods or along the river at Y Pant, listening to the birds singing their hearts out has been very therapeutic.

I have really missed our walking group. I have also been lucky to see a red kite and my son who lives close to the woods has recently been visited by a fox although we haven't been able to catch on camera yet. Looking out for the children's artwork hidden amongst the trees has been so lovely.



Lynne Walsh

## Staying in touch During Lockdown

I think we have all struggled from lack of contact with family and friends but I have certainly found comfort from chatting with my neighbours and one evening the teenager from across the road placed a bar of chocolate on my doorstep because she'd heard me say I had a craving for it. What a sweet gesture.

While out walking most people smile and say hello which is nice too.

I have read a lot of mostly escapist crime novels, I've done hundreds of crosswords but one of my greatest sources of pleasure has been my garden. Not just the flowers but my potatoes are magnificent and just this week I discovered two wild orchids in one of my tubs. Lovely. The birds this year have been so busy and that's a joy watching them as well.

My daily walks have been great, there are so many wild flowers to observe, cowslips, bluebells and now briar roses and joy a whole bank of wild strawberries and all the time you can hear the baby birds in the hedgerows clammering for food.

So, in conclusion a lot to enjoy and be grateful for.

Jennie Jorgie

## Lockdown insights

For me lockdown became a pre-look into my later years, when I might not be able to get out, drive, do things independently.

I checked deeply my needs for human company and how I meet them now and with whom. I considered my options for when I'm less independent to see if I need to make changes now where I'm still able to.

I looked at all my priorities in life and how to maintain them as age gets in their way. For me independence is a top priority, but I noticed that getting up, moving, walking, bending starting to get more difficult, as all of that is necessary, I decided it's time to go to the gym for light exercise regularly. I walk, cycle on a cross trainer, as it moves the arm at the same time, and walk more stairs.

I strictly watch my weight because extra kilos are unnecessary ballast for my joints. I changed my diet to mainly veg, fruit, cheese, fish, eggs and meat and only little carbs.

For my fading concentration I discovered Sudoku, with lessons from the Sudoku guy on the internet.

To discover and get to know my individual needs very precisely helped me to feel more secure and in control to be able to rethink my options for my future. The time when lockdown is going to end.....

Eva Leslie

## Puzzle mania

One of the 5 puzzles I finished. I took a picture of this and laminated it for Nia my granddaughter as she loves tigers.



Sharon Corbett

## From the Chair

Hello everyone,

I hope that you are all well and looking forward to the easing of lockdown.

I am sure that you have enjoyed reading about the varied ways in which some of our enterprising members have made the most of our extended leisure time.

Julius and Tara are working hard, by adapting Cafe 50 and complying with all the rules to enable our groups and others, to meet there in September. It will be wonderful to see you all again.



Meanwhile stay safe and smiling.

With love  
Chris

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## Evening Walks in Creigiau

Like many people I have been walking more regularly around my home area, for me this is Creigiau. I walk mostly in the evening with my son who visited in March and has stayed working from home at my house. Despite having lived here for over 35 years I have walked on footpaths which are new to me and others not walked for a considerable time. I have seen the area go from cool Spring evenings through to hot summer nights. I have used my phone to photograph views, flora and fauna particularly enjoying the evening light which brings everything into a sharp enhanced focus, I think this is helped by the lack of pollution



Creigiau pond from 25<sup>th</sup> March to the 13<sup>th</sup> June

Sheila Gifford

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## Lockdown Reflections

When I think back to the start of lockdown on 23 March and the feelings of dread and anxiety I felt, about how on earth I would get through 12 weeks of staying away from people and shielding my vulnerable husband, I'm really surprised at how well I (we!), have managed.

Like everyone else I've had ups and downs. I know the glorious weather we had during April and May really helped. I was constantly in awe of how Mother Nature just kept on giving whilst we had almost ground to a halt and had to learn the 'new normal'!

The main things I have really missed are being able to meet and chat to friends, browsing in shops and going to the gym. Well really just being able to jump in the car to drive or catch the bus to anywhere!

So how have I coped? Well, I've found new ways of meeting and chatting to friends, browsing and shopping online, following an online circuits class every morning as well as taking advantage of the sunny weather and walking every day.

I jumped at the chance of joining a WhatsApp group and reconnected with my old class-mates. Some of us have known each other since we were in infants' class – almost 60 years ago. We 'chat' every day, about everything and have so many laughs; it's just like being back in that 6<sup>th</sup> form common room! I'm quite sure that if the lockdown had not happened, we would not have bothered with the daily chats on WhatsApp.

I've also made new friends through a Facebook Group and we have regular Zoom 'get togethers' with people joining in from as far afield as America, Belgium and Israel.

We have managed to keep in touch with the newest member of the Carmichael family through WhatsApp video and have seen her first attempts at crawling.

I regularly FaceTime friends if it's just to two of us, and if there's more, we Zoom. I actually get quite excited seeing friends on my computer screen and although it's not the same as seeing them in the flesh, it comes a very close second.

These last 12 weeks or so have made me appreciate the importance of friendships and staying in touch. I've had to find new ways of doing it and no it's not the same as the real thing, but technology has really helped me to not only keep in touch with family and existing friends, but to reconnect with some old ones and make new friends.

And I just cannot wait to meet up for a coffee and chat!

Sarah Carmichael

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