



Sully and District u3a Newsletter August 2023

Sully, Penarth and Dinas Powys

Here is the latest news from your Sully u3a.

Group News

Local History Group – from Nigel Adams

The Local History Group started in 2012, our activities include visits to historic sites between May and October and talks from November to April. This April we visited Glamorgan Archives to see the work they are doing to conserve historic documents and learn how we can use the Archives to research local history. We were shown tithe maps relating to Sully and looked at late 19th century records including mug shots of criminals held by Cardiff Police with details of their crimes. Fortunately, no one from the group recognised their ancestors!

This year we have focused on medieval Wales with a visit to **Tretower Court** and castle to learn about the evolution of living standards, seeing the original Norman Castle dating from 1100 and then on an adjoining site, the manor house dating back to the late 14th century showing how life had become much more comfortable for the landed gentry. The hall is laid out as it would have appeared for a lavish feast in the 1460s when Sir Roger Vaughan was the owner.

In June we did a tour of Cardiff City Centre, to see the original motte and keep set within the remains of the Roman fortress where the Duke of Normandy was imprisoned for the last eight years of his life by his younger brother Henry 1st. He died in his eighties so the conditions of his imprisonment couldn't have been too bad. We also visited the last remaining example of an alley court, Jones Court off Womanby Street, built by the second Marquis of Bute in the 1830s to house the Irish workers who built the Bute West Dock. These alley courts were notorious for their insanitary conditions which led to frequent outbreaks of cholera and other diseases.



In July the group visited Tintern Abbey, the first Cistercian Abbey in Wales and the second in Britain when it was founded in 1131. In 1269 they started to rebuild the Abbey Church which was to become one of the masterpieces of Gothic architecture. The ruined abbey became the inspiration for romantic poets of the late 18th century because of its magnificent setting.

We are hoping to visit the National Museum of History at St Fagans in September to see the recreation of the Princes' Court based on the archaeological evidence from the site of Llys Llywelyn, Anglesey and St Teilo's Church, which has been furnished as it would have appeared in 1530 including wall paintings based on known examples from the late 15th century.

To learn more about the history group email localhistory@sullyu3a.co.uk

Insole Court – from Lynne Thoms

The trip to Insole Court has been arranged for Friday September the 8th to start at 2pm.

Insole Court is a fascinating place, a grade II listed Victorian Gothic Mansion in Llandaff, where you can hear the history of the Insole family over a century together with the recent tale of how the building and grounds were saved for the people of Cardiff. The mansion and Stable Yard are operated by a registered charity, the Insole Court Trust, who began operating the site in 2016. The talk will include the story of how the trust raised the money to save the building and gardens. The site includes extensive gardens a café and a gift shop.

The price is £7 per person to include a talk from John Prior Morris, (who gave the talk in the Old School hall in June) and then a guided tour. The group will be divided into 2 with one group having the talk whilst the other group has the tour and then swapping over.

As Insole Court is nearby please can everyone make their own way there to arrive for 1.30.

Payment will be on the day so please ensure that you bring the right change so there is no hold up regarding the collection of payment.

Insole Court
Fairwater Road
Llandaff
Cardiff
CF5 2LN

For more information please email Lynne at insolecourtvisit@gmail.com

Singing For Pleasure – from Lynda Lee

On Monday 24th July we had our last meeting of the summer for "Singing for Pleasure", when we presented flowers to two very special people, Rosemary Cook and Lynda Morris.

Rosemary has been our leader ever since the group started and has given so much of her time and expertise. Lynda has become her "right hand man" sending out music and updates to the group.

Thank you to both of you for all your hard work.



Enjoying Music – from Jeff and Pam Parkhouse

This group has been operating since the beginning of the year. The convenor, Jeff Parkhouse, has given illustrated musical talks on a range of 'classical music'. The numbers attending are small and there is room for many more.

There will be no meeting in August and Jeff and Pam are on holiday in September. Unless someone wishes to host the September Meeting, then the next meeting will be 18 October 2023 at 2 p.m., Old School, Sully

Of course, new members are welcome. For further information or if anyone is interested in hosting a meeting in September, please contact Jeff at enjoyingmusic@sullyu3a.co.uk.

Canasta

Fancy a friendly game of Canasta? A new Canasta Group has been set up, starting on Wednesday **13th September** from 10 -12 in the Williams Room at the Old School. Cards and tuition will be provided. No experience necessary. It's an easy game to learn and can be played with 2,3, or 4 people. Bring your own eleveses (those coffee sachets are good). Hot water and mugs are available from the kitchen.

Groups Open Day

The Annual Open Day will take place on **Thursday October 12th** from 2 – 3.30 pm, instead of our monthly meeting with a speaker. Every Group is asked to attend and put their wares on show (even if they are full). It is a showcase of what Sully U3A does. Please encourage friends, relatives, people from the pub, people you meet on the street, etc, to come along to see what we have to offer. Refreshments will be available. Details to follow in a later Newsletter.

For info on any of the groups, please contact Gill at groups@sullyu3a.co.uk

Speakers

This month's talk was **A Genomic Fairy Tale: The Representation of Genomics in the Media**.

Report by **Jean Deery**.

A talk that starts with an explanation of scientific terms: Genes, genomes, genomics, DNA – could this possibly be interesting to Sully u3a members? It absolutely could. Rhys Vaughan of the Wales Gene Park gave what some members called 'the most interesting talk ever'.

In short, we have about twenty thousand genes in our bodies, forming just 1-2% of our total DNA, the molecules that contain all the information that determines how our bodies look and function.

Essential to evolution is the mutation of genes. But genes can often mutate in strange ways. The LRP5 gene, for example, governs bone density, but a mutation in it can cause either a loss of function or a gain – as in the case of a woman who survived a catastrophic car accident without a single broken bone!

The audience was already fully engaged by the time Rhys came to his main theme – the portrayal of genomics in the media and especially in popular culture.

Many films have dealt with genetic themes, often portraying disaster scenarios, dystopian societies, or mad scientists using cloning for ulterior motives.

Back in 1978, **The Boys from Brazil** portrayed a Nazi plot to create multiple clones of Hitler and re-establish the Third Reich, and the 1982 film **Bladerunner** is set in a dystopian world where genetically engineered and powerful humanoids, set to work in mines on colonies in space, escape back to earth, forming a threat to their creators.

In reality, cloning has been put to good use. Insulin used to be extracted from pigs' pancreases, a long slow process, until scientists succeeded in mass producing it. By extracting the right protein from human cells, they could introduce it into bacteria in a way that would change the bacteria's DNA. They would then do the job of replicating the protein, after which it could be extracted again ready for use.

But while some films using ideas of genetics are wild fantasy, and some are positively misleading, others have been used to good effect. The 2019 romantic drama **Five Feet Apart** follows two people with cystic fibrosis who fall in love, yet have to maintain a distance between them because of the great risk of passing infections between people with severely impaired immune systems. The film, though perhaps not 100% accurate in its science, did have the effect of raising awareness of cystic fibrosis.

Rhys made the point that we more easily remember facts if they are brought to us through fiction – we love stories. But the downside is that we just as easily absorb misinformation that way. And if we are encouraged to fear scientific experimentation, then research projects risk losing their funding, crucial vaccines are mistrusted, and myths about the spread of disease run rife. We are only too aware of these issues arising in the recent Covid pandemic.

Then there is the question of ethics. Rhys stated the case of Henrietta Lacks, a woman who in the 1950s had certain cervical cancer cells removed from her body. Very unusually, these cells were

rare 'immortal cells', capable of being stored for years, and therefore extremely valuable. But they were kept and used without the consent of Ms Lacks and therefore without any compensation. When her family accidentally discovered this twenty years later, companies had already made millions from the use of the cells in research. Yet there were enormous benefits – in vaccine and drug development, research into cancer, IVF and HIV, and further understanding of DNA replication and gene mapping.

Perhaps it all depends on who is in control? At the moment it is the World Health Organisation (WHO) and national governments who provide safeguards, but some countries are outside WHO, and national governments may not always have the best motives.

The audience would have liked much more of this talk – questions being asked about the workings of the immune system, the use of DNA in 'cold cases', and the accuracy of the DNA testing offered by the genealogy company Ancestry – but maybe some other time?

Hybrid Café – Public Genomics café

The August talk on Genes was so popular, we thought this might be of interest to members. Talks from guest speakers on 21st Sept at the Chapter Arts Centre. [Hybrid cafe](#)

The next monthly meeting of Sully u3a will be on Thursday 14 September at 2pm in the Old School, Sully, when Professor Robert Pickard will give us a talk that will have you buzzing! – **The Wonderful Things about Bees.**

5 Minutes with... A committee member

This month's committee member: **Lynne Thoms**

Current role – Speakers Organiser

When did I join U3A? - I am a newcomer to the committee having just recently joined. At present I am learning from Wendy our new Chair how to find and book interesting speakers for our monthly talks. There is not much to do at the moment as speakers are booked until December 2024. A very interesting and varied programme awaits. Wendy will be a hard act to follow.

My Life - I was born in Ystrad Rhondda many moons ago. I read law at University and practiced as a solicitor for nearly forty years. A university pal and I set up the first all-female law practice in Reading Berkshire, although as we expanded we did employ many men and even took them into the partnership. When I retired I returned home to Wales. I now live in Dinas Powys with my husband and our two dogs.

What I like - I love living near the sea and it's wonderful to be able to walk the dogs on the beach. I also enjoy exploring inland and have had recent holidays in Mid and North Wales. We are planning a trip to Pembrokeshire for the autumn.



I joined the U3A with my cousin who lives in Sully. We have very much enjoyed the program of talks and activities so when the request for committee members went out I volunteered as I feel the U3A is a splendid organisation and I want to support it as best I can.

Community News

Latest WhatsApp scam

I recently received this warning to all WhatsApp users from **South Wales Listens**. Be vigilant. Please click on the link below.

[WhatsApp scam](#)

By the way, I recently signed up to **South Wales Listens** by a (genuine!) PCSO, Ceri Evans, who called at my house. Here is an excerpt from their web site.

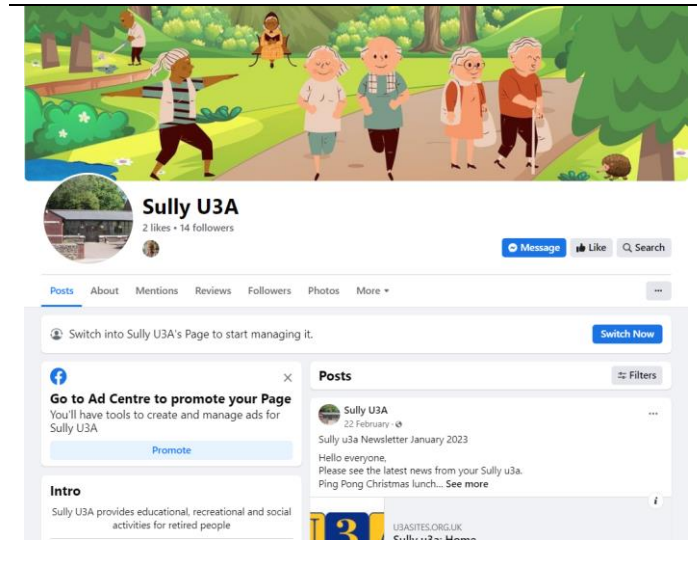
“South Wales Listens is a free messaging service brought to you by South Wales Police where you decide when and how you hear about the issues that matter most to you. Whether that be getting regular crime updates, the latest information on ongoing incidents and emergencies or learning more about what your local police are doing, the choice is yours.

We are committed to maintaining our Neighbourhood policing service. We are proud of our Neighbourhood policing achievements and will continue to work hard to be the best in the country at understanding and responding to the needs of our communities.”

Social Media

Some of you may have seen our [Facebook page](#), which demonstrates that we are well and truly in the 21st century. Due to lack of time on my part, I am looking for someone with relevant skills to take this on as an administrator, and keep it up to date with items of interest to members, eg, the Newsletter, group news, speakers and other items of interest to members, as agreed by the committee. If you would like to volunteer for this role, which really shouldn't be too onerous a task, please let me or any committee member know and I will hand over the reins.

Thank you in anticipation - Claire



Christmas 2023

This is perhaps the wrong time of year to be thinking about Christmas, but we are already planning for the 2023 Party to be held on **Thursday 14th December** starting at 1.30pm – a little earlier than usual. We are looking for volunteers to help us with the preparation and clearing of the party. If you would like to help in this, then please contact us at christmasparty@sullyu3a.co.uk.

Any volunteers will be pre-booked with “Plus 1’s” who are also Sully U3A members.

AGM

Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting of Sully u3a 8th June 2pm in the Old School

Item 1 Present:- The meeting was well attended with over 80 members present and a further 6 having accepted the reports via email prior to the meeting.

Item 2 Chairmans Report:- Roger Pattenden welcomed the members and referred them to his written Chairmans report which had been circulated with the papers inviting them to attend the AGM. He repeated his thanks to the three new committee members for stepping forward and to the rest of the committee for their work in keeping the branch going during the past few difficult years, finally he thanked Jane Lamey who, although no longer serving on the committee, continues to make sure refreshments are provided following each monthly general meeting.

Item 3 Treasurers Report:-

John Williams asked if anyone had any questions on the year end figures he had provided. A member asked for clarification on why no Gift Aid payment from HMRC had been received last year, John explained that as we had not collected any subscriptions for 2021 we wouldn't be entitled to the extra 25% from the Government either. He then asked that his year-end Treasurer's report be accepted by the meeting. This was AGREED and he handed back to Roger.

Item 4 Motions:-

There were no motions for discussion. Roger then explained that he and Janet Pryce-Jones have come to the end of their tenure on the committee and welcomed Wendy Gruffydd as the new chair of the committee wished her well and handed over conducting the rest of the meeting to her.

A presentation was made to Roger and Janet in thanks for the hard work they undertook during their past 6 years on the committee.

Following the close of the business section of the meeting we were regaled with a very enjoyable talk on the renovations to Insole Court given by John Pryor-Morris which was followed by tea and cake. The meeting closed at 3.30.

National News

Please click on the link below for the recent mailing from National U3A. (CTRL-Click) to access.

[u3a Week](#)

[Latest update from the Third Age Trust](#)

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For more information on Sully U3A and up to date information on Group activities. Please visit our website:

<http://www.sullyu3a.co.uk/>

On behalf of the Sully U3A committee, I wish you all the best and hope to see you at one of our general meetings.

Regards,

Claire (Sully u3a Newsletter editor)