



## Sully and District u3a Newsletter February 2024

### Group News

#### Groups Update

The Painting group have increased in numbers and are covering some interesting subjects. Knitters & Stitchers are about to start making Easter chick covers for creme eggs which one of their members will sell, to raise money for Motor Neurone Disease. They are also hoping to go on their annual pilgrimage to the Wonderwool show in Builth Wells on 27<sup>th</sup> April where they can spend what's left of their Christmas present money! There may be spaces on the coach if anyone would like to join them. The cost for the trip will be approx £28, deposit of £14 to be paid on booking, plus £10 entrance fee. Please contact the Knitters and Stitchers group for more details.

Unfortunately, the Welsh group has had to close as there was such a diversity of abilities, but thanks go to Wendy for trying hard to get it off the ground. However, a new Canasta group has started which is going well. If anyone would like to join please contact them via the canasta contact on our web site. No previous knowledge is necessary.

The Local History group has changed its name to just History as they feel they can cover a wider area!

#### Walking Group – Salmon Leaps walk – from Nigel Adams



Eight members of the walking group set out despite the temperature of 0C to walk from Dinas Powys to the Salmon Leaps on the morning of Friday 19th January. We left Mill Road to take the narrow but much improved path to the fields alongside the river Cadoxton. The fields are often very muddy at this time of year but because of a fortnight of dry weather combined with the low temperatures they were passable. We crossed a footbridge over the river to cross a field overlooked by St Michael's Church which dates from the 14<sup>th</sup> century with its

distinctive Saddleback tower. We then joined the road from Michaelston le Pit to branch off shortly afterwards to follow the path to the Salmon Leaps, a series of cascades created by weirs

on the lower reaches of Wrinstone brook. We returned to Dinas Powys via Cwm George, a gorge created by melting ice towards the end of the last Ice Age. Now wooded with high limestone cliffs. It is overlooked by a 6th century hill fort. We finished our trek with a coffee at the Bank.

## **French Conversation**

The French Conversation group is now up and running and meets in Penarth on the second Wednesday afternoon of each month and would welcome new members. For more information please contact french@sullyu3a.com

Please see our website for information on Group activities, plus information on when and where they meet. Also, if anyone would like to suggest the startup of a new group please get in touch with Gill at groups@sullyu3a.co.uk.

## **Speakers**

### **How The World Became Connected - From Jean Deery**

'A Thread Across The Ocean', the title of a book by John Steele Gordon became speaker Geoff Henderson's theme, as he told Sully u3a members the story of the first transatlantic cable. It was a story of risk, adventure, and a belief in 'if at first you don't succeed....' By the end of Geoff's talk the enormous significance of this event became clear.

Back in the early 1850s communications were slow. There was land-based telegraph, morse code, semaphore, and even pigeons, but there was no way of speedy communication across oceans. As Geoff explained, the consequences of this were sometimes tragic. In January 1815 during Britain's war with America, one battle saw the loss of 2000 British lives. The sad irony was that a peace treaty had been signed two weeks previously in Belgium, but with transatlantic ship crossings taking from 6 to 12 weeks, no-one on the battle field knew.

The science was already in place – the ability to send electricity down copper wires; the west's discovery of a tough, waterproof, creature-proof substance, known as Guta Percha, that could provide the perfect protection for an underwater sea cable; and the mapping of the Atlantic floor, proving that a relatively flat route could be found. The need was in place too. The west was well on its way to establishing colonies and markets in the rest of the world, serviced by huge financial institutions.

If only those institutions in London and New York could speak to each other! But to contemplate crossing 2,500 miles and 2,600 fathoms of wild Atlantic was something else. Then on to the scene stepped an unlikely hero. Cyrus West Field was the son of an American preacher, with no scientific or engineering background, but he had vision and was prepared to take risks. When the paper company he had worked for went bankrupt, he bought it, brought it back to profit and retired at 34! Wealthy but bored, he was looking for his next project. He was introduced to Frederick Gisborne, who had unsuccessfully attempted to lay a cable from Newfoundland to the North American mainland, and a plan for a transatlantic cable company was formed. In August 1857, they set out with two specially adapted ships – one American, one British – from a gently sloping sheltered beach in south west Ireland. Each was to carry and lay half of the cable.

However, the cable broke several times. The project was postponed, and next year the ships set off, one from each continent, carrying their lengths of cable to the middle, where it was joined. They then returned to their starting points, each paying out their cable along the sea floor. Finally, in August 1858, they made it. The first transatlantic messages were sent, and great excitement buzzed across the world. It was a short lived glory, with the cable failing in September of the same year, they now knew that it could be done. The world could not turn back. Within a decade, the cable had been re-laid, followed by many more 'threads across the ocean'. The world was connected.



A section of the transatlantic cable as laid in 1865

### **Next Month's speaker**

Next month, Jenny Mallin will be speaking on 'My Grandmother's Legacy – Tales from the British Raj'. This will take place on Thursday 14 March at the usual time of 2pm in the Old School, Sully.

### **Speakers for 2024**

To see the list of speakers for the remainder of this year, please click on the following link which also shows details of our groups timetable. [Booklet and speakers 2024](#)

## Visits

We are proposing to arrange a few members' visits – one in the Spring and the other in the Autumn. Thank you to everyone who added their names to our paper list at the recent general meeting. Further details will be published next month when we have collated all replies.

### **Royal Mint – Llantrisant**

This is an opportunity for members to explore 1,100 years of history. With excellent tours of the coin minting factory and numerous exhibitions, this is a fascinating place to visit. Depending on numbers, transport will be provided.

More detailed information can be found on their website - [Royal Mint Experience](#)

### **BBC Studios – Cardiff**

Step into the future of broadcasting at the BBC studios in Central Square, Cardiff. Here you can visit a Newsroom, where AR, VR, robotic cameras and other mysterious technologies will be demonstrated and explained. Each tour lasts approximately 90 minutes. Within easy reach of Cardiff Central train station, and right on the Cardiff Bus stop.

More information can be found on the BBC website - [BBC Studios Tour](#)

For more information on either of these trips please contact Lynne on [visits@sullyu3a.co.uk](mailto:visits@sullyu3a.co.uk)

## Bits and Pieces

### **This Week in History quiz**

For a bit of fun, try this historical quiz about events in February.

[This week in history quiz](#)

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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)