

## Sully and District u3a Newsletter July 2023

Here is the latest news from your Sully u3a.

### Group News

#### Local History Group

The Local History Group visited Tintern Abbey last week, where it was very peaceful, despite the big restoration programme they are undertaking. A very nice lunch was enjoyed at The Anchor Inn opposite before returning home.

Here are a few pictures taken at the time, for your enjoyment.



## **Singing For Pleasure**

Thank you to all U3A members who came along and supported the Singing for Pleasure group at their recent concert in Penarth. The ensembles from Corpus Christi High School were brilliant and together we raised an incredible £764 on the day to support the work of the Forget Me Not Chorus. We hope also to have raised another £300 through match funding.

We forgot to take any photographs but if you click on the link below you should hear one of our pieces.

[Singing For Pleasure](#)

## **Calling all Groups!**

The u3a is nothing without its groups – without them the u3a would not exist!

When we first enrol with the u3a, we probably all join groups which offer something in which we may already be interested. But what about all those other activities out there, about which we know nothing or very little? This is a call for members in Sully to show-case their groups (it could be the convenors, but not necessarily so). Please consider sending us regular items about your group's activities for inclusion in the newsletter. This month, the Local History group, Singing for Pleasure and the Spanish group have submitted pieces for this edition, but all groups are doing something interesting, and the rest of us would like to know about it.

For info on any of the groups, please contact Gill at [groups@sullyu3a.co.uk](mailto:groups@sullyu3a.co.uk)

## **Speakers**

This month's talk was **'The Balloon Girl' – a local tragedy.**

When in 1896 you are 14, you have been passed from one family to another and have no settled home, how do you survive? At Sully u3a's July meeting, Rosemary Challoner, author of 'The Balloon Girl', told of the unusual decision of one such young girl. It was a decision that proved to be quite the opposite of a means to survive.

Born in Bristol in 1881 to a mother who couldn't, or wouldn't, provide for her, Louisa Maud Evans was given away as a baby to a local couple, William and Mary Crink. All seemed well as the child grew, but some time after she left school the Crinks chose to offer her as a domestic helper to the wife of William Hancock, a West country fairground owner. It was an itinerant life, and at fourteen Louisa found herself at a fair in Truro. There she witnessed the new spectacle of hot air ballooning, in which 'aeronauts' would hang from a trapeze below a balloon and, from five to six thousand feet up, would parachute down to earth, to the thrill of the crowd below. Here was excitement, danger and, to Louisa's eyes, glamour. She was entranced, and eagerly volunteered to look after the balloons of the French balloonist Auguste Gaudron. She had chosen her path.

A short while later, Louisa was with Gaudron again, now in Cardiff. He was there to provide displays of balloon flight at the spectacular and prestigious 'Fine Arts, Industrial and Maritime Exhibition' held in what is now Alexandra Gardens in Cardiff's Civic Centre. The exhibition,

designed to showcase the industry of South Wales, and meant to rival the earlier Crystal Palace Exhibition, was to last five months. It promised a new lake and canal, an overhead railway and a variety of entertainment, a highlight of which would be Monsieur Gaudron's balloon flights. The advertised 'Mademoiselle Albertina', daring lady aeronaut, was none other than Louisa.

She had achieved her dream. Glamour and fame awaited. But it was not to be. At 7.30pm on Tuesday 21 July 1896, the still fourteen year old Louisa clung to her trapeze and rose into the air to cheers from huge crowds. She rose and rose.... and rose again, much higher and further out than the intended bale-out point – until she was a tiny speck heading for the Bristol Channel. At great height, and long after she should have ejected, she was seen leaving the balloon. Possibly having lost consciousness by now, she would likely have known nothing of the descent, or felt the final dramatic splash into the water, where the parachute covered her body and pulled her down. She was found several days later washed up on the shore at Nash, near Newport.

Thousands were in shock, the Cardiff exhibition's committee was censured, and there were questions to be answered - about the girl's age, her previous lack of experience, and the mystery of the parachute, firmly clipped to her clothing on ascent, but missing from the dead body. The following year the law was changed to ensure that no girl under 18, or boy under 16, could be allowed to take part in 'dangerous performances". But it was too late for the girl who lies in Cathays Cemetery.

**The next monthly meeting of Sully u3a** will be on Thursday 10 August at 2pm in the Old School, Sully, when Rhys Vaughan from the Wales Gene Park will give us a talk entitled

**A Genomic Fairy Tale: The Representation of Genomics in the Media.**

## **Porthcawl Study Day**

### **Invitation to Porthcawl Study Day**

Porthcawl u3a have kindly invited us to their annual study day on Wednesday September 6th: you can access the details by clicking on the link below. If you do intend going, please arrange this yourself, but if you require car-share, please contact [speakers@sullyu3a.co.uk](mailto:speakers@sullyu3a.co.uk) and we'll do our best to help.

[Porthcawl Study Day](#)

## Happy Birthday Helga!

Felix Cumpleaños, Penblwydd Hapus, Happy Birthday Helga



Not many u3a groups can boast of celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of one of its members: Sully u3a Spanish group did just that on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> June with a cake, Prosecco and flowers, ahead of Helga's big birthday on Sunday.

Helga Evans is originally from Norway; both her English and her Spanish are excellent. She is very popular in the group – she has such wisdom and keeps us all in touch with her life. On Sunday there will be a party in the Norwegian Church in Cardiff Bay to which friends and family will be coming from Norway and from the USA.

We wish her well and look forward to hearing all about it at our next meeting.

## Committee Members

As you all probably know, the u3a constitution limits service on the committee to a maximum of six years. For this reason, Chair Roger Pattenden and Membership Officer Janet Pryce-Jones, stood down at the last AGM in June. We were fortunate that three u3a members Maggie Grayson, Mo Hoskins and Lynne Thoms stepped up and the committee is now quorate. Last year Barry u3a was forced to close: not because of lack of members, but because insufficient members could serve on their committee. At the moment, this is not a problem for us, but we would like to be prepared for the future. Succession planning is key to good governance! If members would like to join the committee (*without portfolio!*) to see what is involved, to get an insight into the workings of the organisation as a whole or even to offer assistance, they would be most welcome. The work is not tedious, it doesn't need to be time consuming and it could be fun! They might decide to stay!

All would be welcome, but if you have skills – particularly IT skills – to offer, the welcome would be open-armed.

Please get in touch with any committee member to register your interest.

## Community News

### **Sully Community Cinema**

Please note, there will be no Community Cinema until September.

### **Sully Village Show and Craft Fayre – Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September**

Planning for this event is well under way for this year with categories for Art, Photography, Cookery, Craft and Gardening. Show schedules are available at The Old School and at the library, so have a think about showing off your talents and entering one of the categories.

For more information please visit [sullyvillageshow@gmail.com](mailto:sullyvillageshow@gmail.com)

## 5 Minutes with... A committee member

This month's committee member – **Alan Roberts – Current role - Old School Rent collector!**



**My Life:** Born and bred in Penarth, attending Victoria, Fairfield and Penarth County Grammar Schools.

My first job was a delivery boy for the Garden Basket in Cornerswell Road, then, when I left school, I started a career at National Provincial Bank in Plymouth Road. At this time I met my future wife, Liz, who worked at the Midland Bank. After 33 years I left the bank and joined Legal & General for another 12 years before retirement. We celebrate 55 years marriage this year.

**When did I join U3A?** - Having lived in Penarth for most of my life Liz and I moved to Sully in 2013 when we joined U3A. I am leader of the photography group but enjoy other groups too.

**Hobbies** - Photography, of course, quizzes [I run a fortnightly one in Penarth], Tai-chi and petanque. I am also treasurer and Vice chairman of the Sully & District Gardening Society.

**On my tv and radio** - Not much, but sometimes dramas, documentary or a film on TV and the preset on the radio is Classic fm.

**Favourite film and books** - North by Northwest I could watch over and over. Otherwise, anything good without gratuitous swearing. Lord of the Rings, Terry Pratchett, Peter May and usually thrillers.

**What I like** - Relaxing, preferably on holiday somewhere, driving, good beer.

**And hate** - Voiceovers on TV that are not delivered in a normal voice. E.g. India Fisher on Masterchef, the Vodafone ad. And the ITV3 late evening link.

## National News

We think that it might be useful to make all members aware of the opportunities available on the UK wide website. Some of you might be using it already of course. I, for instance, have submitted photographs online and two have been shown. There are two options for photos: a themed subject, or Found in Nature. Well worth a look, even if one doesn't contribute. Also, there is a short story competition and a poetry competition (a couple of months ago I submitted a poem). There are several other interesting options, which could be suitable for someone. Take a look. I hope this has been of some use, albeit in the knowledge that perhaps not everyone has access to such material.

### [u3a - National Programmes](#)

(From Mo, your South Wales Network (SWN) representative for Sully U3A)

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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)