

BARMOUTH



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Newsletter



Autumn 2012



*...I'm singin' in the
rain*

Well, I tried to find a positive quote about autumn, but all that sprang to mind was the forecast of a month's rain falling in one day in parts of Wales!

Thank goodness for the Olympic and Paralympic Games this summer. They took my mind off the awful weather and I think instilled in us patriotic feelings that more than a few of us had forgotten.

I visited the Paralympics in September and was in absolute awe of the athletes and full of admiration for the way 80,000 spectators were managed in what seemed such an effortless way. I even learned the Mexican National Anthem!

So ... after our August break I hope you are all filled with enthusiasm for our autumn and winter programme.

Norma Stockford

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT –

A message from Alan Vincent

Having submitted my first piece to Norma only a day late with a commitment to do better; this one unfortunately does not show any improvement, again being sent over a day after the deadline.

My excuse (No. 271 on the list) was that our family were celebrating my daughter's marriage (*Note to self – delete no 271 from list!*).

This event and its associated family get-togethers reinforced for me that however much Geraldine and I enjoy our life of retirement here, family is enormously important in our lives. A great joy to be reminded of this.

The activities that our U3A group support, I hope, will slowly be increased over the next few months. Table Tennis, Local History and a Drama group are all under consideration. The possibility of a new beginners' Art group is also being discussed but, as this would be expensive, it would have to be costed carefully with some guarantee that enough people would be prepared to commit in advance to cover the costs. Finally we will also look at, if not a full Welsh course, maybe Welsh pronunciation classes so that members like myself who have not yet managed to get to grips with the language can be confident that they can say place names etc. correctly.

If any of these groups interest you then please let us know – Mary Howell is in the process of taking over the Group Co-ordinator role from Sylvia Vannelli who has done sterling work in this regard for some considerable time. You can speak to either lady.

At an all Wales level the U3A has had a change in the Trustee for Wales, who represents Wales on the UK National Committee. The new appointee is Anthony Hughes from the Swansea branch.

Finally, a word of thanks to George Mandow, who is leaving us for the land of The Hobbits. George has been a brilliant supporter of this group from the start, we wish him well for the future. Enjoy Middle Earth George!



SINGING FOR FUN

From: Evelyn Richardson

The Singing for Fun group decided they would meet in August and 12 of us had a good sing. This is the first time we have met during August so it may be the start of something new. After all, singing is pleasant at all times of the year.

Two of the group have been working hard to set up a new choir - the Cambrian Coast Community Choir. This choir is based at Coleg Harlech and meets on Monday evenings from 7.30pm to 9.00 pm. This will be a more formal singing session than our own session and I see it as a progression for those who wish to sing more complex music and to be musically challenged.

The new choir is led by a member of the college staff who is a trained musician and singing teacher. If you are interested - contact me or look out for the posters. I went to the first session last Monday and thoroughly enjoyed it.

MONTHLY GATHERINGS

From: Bronwen Dorling

At our September Monthly Gathering, Sally Kirkham led us in a drama workshop. And what a wonderful surprise this was!

Starting gently with relaxation exercises, Sally led us on to work in pairs, trying to coordinate counting with actions – harder than you might think.

We learned the value of co-operation when one of each pair took a negative view of life and the other had to talk him or her into a more upbeat frame of mind. And we ended up with a hilarious exercise – the detective had to spot the murderer, who killed his victims by winking at them. This obliged them to die on the spot, and very realistic they were in their death throes. With six corpses in the room, the detective had (almost) tracked down the murderer.

I don't think a Monthly Gathering has ever laughed as much as we did that afternoon.

Well done, Sally, it was a magnificent workshop, and we hope to see you again sometime perhaps running a regular drama workshop for Barmouth U3A?

Evelyn has now taken over the facilitating of our Monthly Gatherings and has some interesting speakers lined up. So keep an eye out for details in the monthly calendars...

Ed.

WALKING GROUP

From: George Mandow

Some years ago I went to look at the Roman fort near Trawsfynydd with friends who were staying with me. I'm not sure how deeply impressed they were but enough to want to 'just' have a look at the amphitheatre. We looked under every blade of grass, but clearly not the right ones, and had to go home without seeing it.

We went up Moelwyn Mawr the next day in sunshine and that puts any disappointment into perspective. Incidentally if you haven't climbed MM, it is one of the great local walks (MR 658 449) Anyway, looking at the ordnance survey map of the area, there seemed to be a potential walk near the amphitheatre and Tomen-y-mur, so it was a good opportunity to 'just' find the amphitheatre and plan a walk. Having failed twice to locate it, I was unable to help an American man who asked me where it was. Half a minute later he called over to me, pointing to what was obviously a Roman amphitheatre right next to the car park. The whole planning of the walk was a bit like that: non-existent paths through bogs (how do you know if there isn't a path, or there is but you can't find it?); path intersections with no signs until you pick the right path and there a beautiful yellow arrow points where you are going; farm yards with 'Can I help you?' farmers; sheep in folds which you try to avoid but are shouted at to go through. The rain held off on the day of the walk, until we stopped for lunch.

The next loop of green foot paths on the map to attract me was near Llanelltyd on the route to Y Garn from the east (another lovely walk 705 231). One half was straight forward on the path marked on the map. The other did have a path most of the way, visible to a tracker, but not the one on the map, well probably not, and there were no yellow arrows where they were needed. And although it was only a mile, while each section seemed very like the last, the path took a different course, so you had to remember where to go next. Happily Llanelltyd is very near home so I could pop back and have another recce (and another, and another...).

I had hoped to finish my stint as group leader with a repeat of the first walk we did, above Penmaenpool to the Gwernan lake, but the removal men were coming that day and I had to cancel it. The walks have a large social element which I shall miss. Some of the present group were on that first walk and other, younger, members have replaced those who have dropped out.

Thank you all for your company.

Mary Howell has taken over as Group leader: you will hear from her.

Oh George, we are all going to miss you

STROLLERS

From: Trish and John Percival



It was a bright and breezy day for the strollers' return after the summer break, for a walk around Llanfair, Pensarn and Llandanwg.

Most strollers met on the 38 bus between Barmouth to Llanfair. Others joined us at the bus shelter at Llanfair.

The first section of the walk took us up over the hill at the back of Llanfair with wonderfully clear views of Shell Island and the bay. We then came down at Pensarn where we crossed the main road and the railway line into the Pensarn Activity Centre with its canoes and boats.

Back at sea level, we wandered past the harbour and along the estuary, on part following the new Welsh Coastal Path, until we found a sheltered spot overlooking Shell Island to eat our lunch in the pleasant sunshine.

Continuing along the Estuary, we came to a jetty extending out towards Shell Island. Trish insisted that we walk to the end of the jetty for a group photograph before finally coming to Llandanwg beach. We continued past St. Tanwg's Church, situated in the sand dunes, bringing us to Y Maes Cafe. Again sitting in the warm sunshine we enjoyed a drink at the cafe before walking back up the hill to catch the bus back from Llanfair.



LUNCH GROUP

From: Marie Thomas

We couldn't hold a Lunch Group in September as the college term didn't start until after our normal Thursday meeting.

I have booked October 18th, November 22nd and **FRIDAY** December 14, - the only day in December not fully booked.

I would be grateful if you could let me know early if you want to attend. Numbers are tight in December, so book early to avoid disappointment!



BADMINTON

From: Wendy and Rod Bramley

The U3A Badminton Challenge

Every few weeks we have to report
Of activities on the Badminton court
The players are lovely and all try their best,
But writing something different each time – now
that is a test.

Singing for Fun travel near and far,
To theatres and concerts in which they can star
They sing to an audience whom they try to
please
So to write different things can be done with
such ease.

U3A Walking Group travels our mountains and
dales
Their articles have photos of beautiful Wales
The pictures show views with a wonderful sight
About such varied subjects, it's easy to write.

Our U3A Stollers also travel afar
Using the bus and occasionally car
They attract many members with smiles on
their faces
It's easy to write about these different places.

The Book Group are clever and analyse writing
Tragedy, comedy and topics exciting,
They write magazine contributions with
splendid reviews,
Explaining literary critique and up-to-date news.

So to Norma and the Writing Group we just had
to ask
If they would help us complete the Badminton
task,
We've no doubt they'll try - but let's not forget,
It's just a shuttlecock to-ing and fro-ing over a
net....

The first response – last issue – came from
Norma -so pretty,
She composed an appropriate amusing ditty,
But the Challenge is widened for all to write
something better
Submitting different Badminton articles for each
Newsletter!

*Send in your entries for the Badminton Challenge by
10th December please!* *Editor*



FRIDAY BRIDGE GROUP

From: George Mandow

**This group started in the early days of
the Barmouth U3A as a beginners'
group: both the group as bridge players
and me as a teacher.**

Quite soon, the group formed another group
to play social bridge on Wednesdays,
without someone looking over their
shoulder. This new group is very
successful, meeting every Wednesday
regardless. The Friday group, including an
original member, had moved on to more
esoteric aspects of the game, but still
someone looked over their shoulders. Now
the group is ending.

There is no doubt that members' skills have
improved over the years and I wish them
many happy hours at the bridge table and
thank them for their company and good
humour under interrogation ***and
for the party!***



Book Reading

From: Evelyn Richardson

The July read was *Family Reunion* by Carol Smith ... a murder mystery, a type of book popular with many readers.

The narrative of the book spanned 170 years, several generations of a family and a few different countries. The author had thoughtfully supplied a family tree which helped one to keep track of the many family members.

One of our members described it as a 'Gothic Horror' with the usual family traits of madness, a creepy house with hidden rooms, plus a mad woman in the attic.

There seemed to be a lot of getting rid of unwanted or inconvenient family members. So nothing new there, at least in literature but not in real life, fortunately.

As is usual some liked it, some didn't, which leads to interesting discussions.

Again, the conversation stimulated by the book strayed into other areas, always lively and at times highly amusing. To quote one member:

'The one good thing about being married, he was good at catching spiders!'

Thanks to Doreen for her hospitality, super biscuits (I had two) and very welcome cuppa.

...and from Rachel Cleaver:

The chosen theme for the September meeting was an historical novel of our own choice, and there was an extremely varied and interesting selection, ranging from the early 11th century through to the 20th.

'Mistress of the Art of Death' by Arianna Franklin, was set in Cambridge during the reign of Henry II, when a female forensic scientist arrived from Sicily. Her expertise was, of course, not acknowledged and she had to pretend to be a lowly helper.

The renowned historical writer, *Phillipa Gregory's* book *'Lady of the Rivers'*, related to the life and times of the first Duke of Bedford.

Two separate books were set during the life of King Henry VIII. Firstly, *'Wolf Hall'* by *Hilary Mantel*, the story of Thomas Cromwell's rise to fame as a 'fixer' to Cardinal Wolsley. The other related to the rise and fall of Anne Boleyn. The story as told by her sister-in-law, Jane, who was instrumental in her execution by spreading false information regarding Anne's relationship with other men.

'The Secret Room' by *Marion Eames* brought us much nearer home as it was about the Quaker movement around the 17th Century. (There is an exhibition and Quaker Trail to be seen in Dolgellau.)

Our final book, *'The Bitter Seed'* by *Meg Hutchinson*, brought us to World War I. Set just north of Birmingham, a female not only took over the running of the steel mills, she also turned her house into a hospital for wounded soldiers and became an early member of the Suffragette Movement, causing quite a scandal in her home town.

Our October book is *'Caught in the Light'* by *Robert Goddard*

Quiz:

1. Who is the author of Dorian, The Butt and the Booker-shortlisted Umbrella?
2. In Greek Mythology, Dryads, Nereids and Oreads are types of what?
3. Although its origins are in Canada, what organisation was founded in the UK in 1915 by John Nugent Harris and Madge Watt?
4. Who does Kate Ford play in Coronation Street?
5. The backbone of Wales is formed by what range of mountains?
6. Which Jazz singer was born Eleanora Fagin in Baltimore in 1915?
7. What is the name of JK Rowling's latest novel?
8. What did Clarissa Dixon-Wright suggest we do with badgers if it comes to culling them?
9. Where would you see the car registration number GBZ?
10. The actor who played Inspector Dreyfus in the Pink Panther films died recently. What was his name?
11. Who was the Captain of 'The Pequod'?
12. Who commanded 'The Black Pig'?
13. In Verdi's Opera 'Otello', how does Otello die?
14. Where would you be if you had just landed at Hellenikon airport?
15. What angle is greater than an acute angle but smaller than an obtuse angle?

Answers at end of newsletter:....

Website

If you want to know what's on in our U3A and can't put your hand on the diary dates, they are also published on our website. Don't forget to check it for up to the minute information:

www.barmouthu3a.org.uk

Here's to the Hero

A concert attributing RMS Titanic's 5th Officer and Barmouth's own Harold Lowe will be held in St John's Church on Sunday 18th November. The concert features West End and International Opera Star **Anthony Stuart Lloyd**. Anthony hails from Cardiff and sang on the Titanic Memorial Cruise earlier this year. The event will be supporting the Church and Barmouth RNLI.

Tickets are £10 and available from: Barmouth Tourist Information Centre, Station Road, Barmouth, LL42 1LU. Tel: 01341 280787
Email: barmouth.tic@gwynedd.gov.uk

Tickets will also be available on the door on the night.

Join the Debate....

Healthcare in North Wales is changing and the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board is inviting you to comment.

Many of the changes do not affect us, but there are proposals to change services in Tywyn Memorial Hospital and to permanently close the inpatient beds for Older People's Mental Health Services at Dolgellau. The reason given is that the Unit has been closed for two years because it has not been possible to recruit qualified staff, but it's not clear how much effort has been made!

You can make your comments online at www.bcuhbjoindthedebate.wales.nhs.uk. Consultation questionnaires are also available at the old Communities First Office (now Cwmni'r Bermo) in Station road, Barmouth, and should be returned by 28th October 2012.

It is important that we make our voices heard.

Christmas Party !



The U3A Christmas party this year will be held on **Wednesday 12th December** in the Arts Room, starting at 6.30 p.m. If you want to let that latent exhibitionist streak reveal itself – please let Evelyn know if you have an (*appropriate!*) party piece you would like to perform for us.

I wonder what is in store for us this year?

Evelynrichardson73@yahoo.com or 01341 250428

New Groups for Drama, History and Table Tennis

Following the very enjoyable drama session at the monthly meeting by Sally Kirkham, it was suggested we run a regular group. If interested please contact Mary Howell 01341 247553/ janers_h@hotmail.com Please indicate if you would be willing to lead the group on occasion.

A history group has also been mooted. If you are interested in attending or running a history group please contact Mary Howell (as above) Please indicate what you would wish for from a history group.

For table tennis please contact Geraldine Vincent (01341 247415)

Answers to Quiz

1. Will Self
2. Nymph
3. The WI
4. Tracy Macdonald
5. The Cambrian Mountains
6. Billie Holiday
7. The Casual Vacancy
8. Eat them!
9. Gibraltar
10. Herbert Lom
11. Captain Ahab (Moby Dick)
12. Captain Pugwash
13. He stabs himself
14. Athens
15. A right-angle

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The winter newsletter will be published for January. Latest copy date: 15th of December please.