

BARMOUTH



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Newsletter



Autumn 2014

Autumn...the year's last, loveliest smile."

[Indian Summer]"
– William Cullen Bryant

....and what a fabulous summer and autumn we are having here in beautiful Barmouth. It's so lovely to enjoy a peaceful September with just a sprinkling of tourists around – just enough to make it interesting – and we have had super weather for all our walks and strolls.

Ed.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A message from Alan Vincent

Looking back at my notes for the Spring 2014 Newsletter one of my "beefs" was the lack of a mobile phone signal at home. At that time I mentioned that the signal had not been available since January. As we reached August with no signal I eventually managed to get a response from the engineering group (my contract is with Orange/EE) who advised as follows:

Hi Alan, the fault within the area remains to show as work in progress. I'm afraid there is no set timescale at the moment. Please come back through at any time for an update. Regards

Very polite but did not offer any solution to the problem. However at the same time I came across some reports on mobile signals being generated via the broadband. This made some sense as even the main masts eventually connect to the internet. More investigation revealed that most suppliers, including EE, have developed a piece of kit which can generate a signal when connected to the internet.

The EE version is called a "Signal Box" and although they don't advertise it or even offer it for sale I was able to get them to agree to supply one, given that the Dyffryn mast was not working.

The unit is a bit bigger in size than a pack of cards and plugs directly into my BT router via an Ethernet cable. It also requires power.

And it works!! – our phones now have all four bars showing, calls are perfect and the phone works all around the house. Also anybody else with an EE phone who turns up can use the link. Of course calls, when made, use some of your broadband allowance, but for me, with an unlimited deal, it is great.

So, if you are struggling with a lack of mobile phone signal at home, this type of installation is well worth investigating. Give me a call if you want to know more.

I have said before that August is a quiet month for me, because many of the organisations, including our own, virtually shut down for the month. This year it seemed particularly quiet because we had already been away on holiday in June and our grandsons were away in Disneyland. I enjoyed the peace! Now however things have started up again, with half term visits planned and Santa Specials already booked. My diary is once again filled with children's events, organisation meetings and of course football matches. Do I miss the peace? – No because all this activity keeps me going, but I will, of course, welcome the silence back again next summer.

Yesterday I joined the Strollers on their walk from Rhyd Ddu to Beddgelert, a great walk with wonderful views, and, of course, a journey on a train... and you know how I enjoy trains. A GREAT day out!

STROLLERS' GROUP

From: Patricia Percival, Strollers' Group co-ordinator

JULY WALK AT TAL-Y-BONT

For July the strollers stayed closer to home with a circular walk from Tal-y-Bont to Pont Fadog.

From the meeting point for the walk at Tal-y-Bont Car Park, we followed the Afon Ysgethin past the Ysgethin Inn onto the good footpath which runs through the woods alongside the river. En route one of our dogs decided to take a cooling dip in the river – rather too cold for the rest of us.



On reaching the road we took a minor detour to the left to see the views across the bay. At this point two of our members left the main party to return by a shorter route.

Retracing our steps and continuing along the road brought us to Pont Fadog Bridge, an ancient stone bridge on one of the old Drovers roads. Here we had a short rest while we looked at the coin inserted in a hole in the bridge – we decided that it was a modern coin. A short walk on we turned off to go through the farm yard, with its many gates, leading to the footpath which would take us back.



Rather than take the planned route from here an alternative was suggested by Dave and Vic, who kindly offered to take over the lead. This route was most interesting, passing through a field with several piles of stone known as Cairns, and lovely sea views. This proved an ideal place to stop for our lunch, the stones providing useful seating.

Following lunch we continued down, through the fields of cattle, onto the road. From the road we turned right over the footbridge, bringing us back to our cars just in time as the rain arrived. A relatively easy and pleasant stroll of 3.5 miles.



SEPTEMBER STROLL AT LLANBEDR



Our first Strollers' Walk following the summer break was well supported with eighteen members taking part. The walk was led by Ian and Maxine, starting from their home at Llanbedr where we parked our cars.

The very pleasant walk took us through woods and followed the Afon Cwm Nantcol River with its splendid waterfalls to the attractive dam and reservoir. Here, on crossing the bridge, we noted the natural fountains below us, produced by leaks in a water supply pipe. These apparently form a most unusual display when they freeze in winter. We then continued on to open country offering wonderful coastline and hill views. A most attractive spot was found for our lunch stop, where we sat on convenient stones overlooking the coast, with a back drop of the 589 metre high Moelfre hill.



After our 5.58 mile walk we returned to Ian and Maxine's home where we were made most welcome, sitting in the garden enjoying tea and homemade biscuits and cake in glorious sunshine.



Many thanks to our guide and hosts for an enjoyable walk and for their hospitality.



Film Group

From: Alan Vincent

The Film Group has enjoyed two classic films recently watching 'Brief Encounter' in September and then enjoying immensely 'Some Like It Hot' in our October viewing.

For November we plan to show – bearing in mind that it will probably by then be cold and damp – 'Summer Holiday' starring Cliff Richard. Why not come along and re-visit your teenage years? I'm sure most of you will be able to sing along with Cliff....*We're all going on a Summer Holiday.....* Thursday 13th – Dragon Theatre – 1:30 for 2.05 film start – Tea, coffee and biscuits included. Only £3 (this covers the cost of the venue). Our film for December will be 'It's A Wonderful Life' starring James Stewart.



BADMINTON GROUP

From: Wendy Bramley, Badminton Group co-ordinator

Fancy a game of Badminton? Why not join us on a Friday afternoon 2 - 4 p.m. in the Leisure Centre?

We are a happy group and would make you most welcome.

Want to know more? Ring Wendy on 01341 242706 or just turn up any Friday. Don't think about it just do it ...it's such good exercise!

U3A WALKING GROUP

In **June** we had a really tough walk up Cadair Idris,

This took a lot longer than planned. But the day which was fine and sunny and not too hot give us some beautiful views of Llyn Cau and the surrounding mountains.

At 2928 feet some say this route is more difficult than going up Snowdon, due to the scree at the top and having to come down the same way. So if we go up Cadair again it will not be on the Minffordd path.

July was a short walk above the town of Dolgellau.

It was mostly around wooded areas of Glyn Aran and open countryside with fine views over Dolgellau and the surrounding hills. We ended up in the local Milk bar in the town at the end of the walk.

September

From: Norma Stockford

Peter led the walk around Trawsfynydd Lake on the 22nd September. Thirteen members met at the café car park off the A470 on a fine, clear and sunny September day for a steady stroll around lake.

From the car park we meandered through a woodland track, passing a charming inlet with fishing boats and views of the power station reflected in the lake, before turning on to the tarmac road and on to the village of Trawsfynydd.



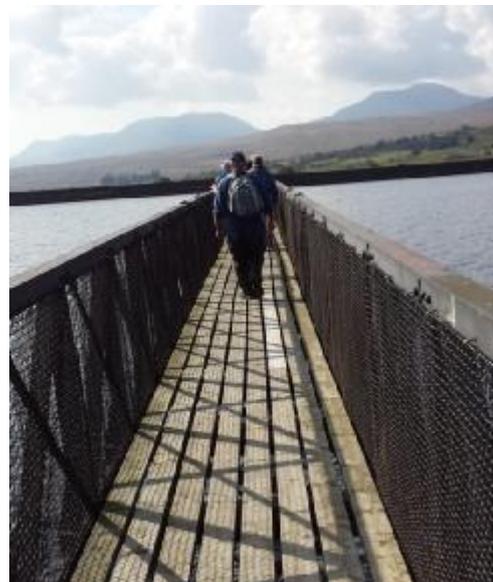
We stopped for a while opposite the statue of the famous Welsh poet **Hedd Wyn**, born in Trawsfynydd in 1887 and killed during the WW1 Battle of Passchendaele. He was posthumously awarded the bard's chair at the 1917 National Eisteddfod.



(Editor's note: Hedd Wyn's poem, 'Rhyfel' (War), one of his most frequently quoted works, is as apt in our war-torn world today as it was when written one hundred years ago:

Why must I live in this grim age,
When, to a far horizon, God
Has ebbed away, and man, with rage,
Now wields the sceptre and the rod?
Man raised his sword, once God had gone,
To slay his brother, and the roar
Of battlefields now casts upon
Our homes the shadow of the war.
The harps to which we sang are hung,
On willow boughs, and their refrain
Drowned by the anguish of the young,
Whose blood is mingled with the rain.)

Leaving the village, we crossed the lake via a long narrow bridge to the south bank and stopped for lunch, with delightful views of the Moelwyns, Arenigs and Cader.



We continued to Maentwrog dam – which feeds the Maentwrog Hydro Electric Station. The lake was first created in 1922 to store water for the Hydro Electric power station lower down the valley. In the early 1960s, the dam was raised and the lake enlarged during the construction of the Trawsfynydd Nuclear Power Station, the extra water being used for cooling the reactors.

Our route then took us past the Trawsfynydd Power station buildings where I had my first job working for Nuclear Civil Constructors in 1962. In 1990 the power station was closed and decommissioning commenced.

We came back through natural woodlands of birch and oak (no fir trees!) to the café being run by Antur Stiniog where we enjoyed tea and cake with views of the lake before our return home.

PUZZLE CORNER

1. How is the speed of one nautical mile more commonly known?
2. Sarajevo is the capital of which country?
3. Which Welsh-born (b1872 – d1970) philosopher, historian, social critic and political activist said ‘The stupid are cocksure and the intelligent full of doubt?’
4. Brahmins are a priestly caste in which religion?
5. Which country’s flag consists of a blue Scandinavian Cross on a white background?
6. During which century did the landscape gardener Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown live?
7. Who had a 1960 hit with the song Only the Lonely (know the way I feel tonight)
8. Caused by the Epstein Barr Virus, and mainly affecting adolescents and young adults, how is the disease mononucleosis more familiarly known?
9. What sort of creature is a boomslang?
10. What name for a large cemetery came from the Greek and means ‘City of the Dead’?.

Answers on page 8

DISCUSSION GROUP

From: Peter Leyden

In July the discussion topic was on rural transport and the lack of it in North Wales. Earlier in the year some bus companies pulled out of a number of routes, most notable was the X94 going to GHA by Arriva buses. The claim was that they were losing money on this and other routes. Well, it seems that these companies make a good profit on buses - throughout Britain 45 % of their takings come from the taxpayer. We ended discussing an integrated transport system that will allow people to get to and from work, but also provide transport for outlying villages and small towns. It was felt that the only solution was for the transport system to be under public control either on a council or nationwide basis.

In September we discussed ‘*Immigration and Migration - Myth or Reality?*’ The first question was - Does it benefit us? Some said it was not helping the country but, it was suggested that immigrants cost less than the native population as they are young and want to work.

The issue of hospitals and housing was mentioned but the only real point raised on these two topics was that it was London and the South East of England that have problems.

A recent EU Commission report noted that there will be a 25 million demographic shortfall in the ageing EU labour force by 2020, made worse by the emigration of skilled workers from Ireland, Italy, Spain, Greece and Lithuania. So if we want a decent old age we will need to let people come to Britain and Europe to help the economy grow.

TABLE TENNIS

Most Fridays at noon - £1. **Best Value in Town!**



Group Co-ordinator's Report

From: Geraldine Vincent

All the groups are functioning well thanks to the assistance of some very valuable leaders. Mention must also be made of those members who stand in for a leader when necessary. Without these willing souls the groups would not function. We always welcome new members for a trial session. Please look at the diary and see all the groups we have and give the leader a quick ring or just turn up. Don't be shy. Now that autumn is upon us, with longer and darker evenings, it is great to have an interest in the daylight hours.

I am always looking for suggestions for new groups. The beginner's bridge has started and in the first three sessions we have seen the numbers rise to 18+. Hopefully members will transfer to the Wednesday evening Social Bridge when confident enough. Brian and Margaret Williams are brilliant tutors and we even use a blackboard and easel. The board cleaner has not been thrown at our heads YET. Nearly three hours of brain strain and it flies by.

The luncheon group has now been taken over by Rhiannon Roberts. Our thanks to Marie Thomas for six years of organisation.

For eagle eyed television viewers: there was a contestant on Pointless, who was asked their hobbies. They replied 'U3A'. When questioned further they said their favourite group was Wine Tasting! Maybe I should explore that one?

BOOK READING

From: Geraldine Vincent



The Book Group has now settled nicely into the home of Sylvia Heyworth. As well as a discussion of the current book we also digress and also choose books for the coming months. We have now risen to the mighty heights of homemade cake, as well as biscuits and tea. Long may it continue.

MONTHLY GATHERINGS

From: Jacqui Puddle, Meeting co-ordinator

July - Wednesday 9th.

The presentation was by one of our own members David Bath, on the history of Mawddach Crescent where he lives. It was an interesting subject and David came with many books, (some first editions), and objects of interest. The area has been fully researched by David and after the presentation there were many questions and additional information given by members which David can also add to his immense knowledge.

September - Wednesday 10th.

Our speaker was a representative of Macmillan Cancer Care Support who talked about a joint venture with Barmouth Library of a drop-in event and group reading session, open to all comers.

There was also a short discussion about the feasibility of a group to promote the Friends of Dolgellau Hospital. This has now been taken further and an announcement will be made after Christmas with regards to an inaugural meeting.

October - Wednesday 8th

Betty Annett, a member of our U3A gave an interesting talk themed "Dancing Through Life". A potted history of the speaker and her progress through life from being on points for ballet at 3 years of age but later not allowed to join the famous Tiller Girls. A brilliant dance teacher who loves music and movement.

We are now running both a small table top sale and a raffle at these meetings and the raffle in particular is helping to cover our room costs.

Tea, biscuits and welcome is always here. Come along and chat and enjoy the varied speakers.

Dragon Theatre and Easyfunding

You will be aware that Barmouth U3A is a major supporter of The Dragon Theatre and the facilities are used by our groups extensively.

As with many similar organisations fundraising is an important way of maintaining the Dragon Theatre for the future and so, twelve months ago, we introduced a way to raise funds for the Theatre at NO COST TO YOURSELVES.

12 months on and the Theatre has received more than £245 as a result of this initiative, but we could, given that five people raised almost £200 of this total, achieve much more if we could get many more people involved.

The Dragon Theatre, Barmouth is a cause on <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/> and each time you use this site as part of your on line shopping process then a small contribution can be made to the theatre.

This is how it works:

- 1) Register with Easyfunding
- 2) When you are asked to choose your cause, select Dragon Theatre, Barmouth.
- 3) When ready to shop log in to Easyfunding
- 4) Find your supplier – over 2,700 available – including all the popular ones.
- 5) Go shopping

A small percentage of your purchase (e.g. 1.5% from Amazon) is credited to the Dragon Theatre, Barmouth – at no cost to you. Any questions give me a ring.

Alan Vincent (01341 247415)

Interested in participating in an On-Line Study?

The other day we received an email via our web site from a Melissa Colloff studying at Warwick University. The details are given below and if any of you are interested in taking part please contact the lady direct via email: M.F.Colloff@warwick.ac.uk

I am a PhD student at Warwick University, and we are currently conducting some online research in which we wish to sample some older participants.

A member of the Warwick U3A group suggested that I contact you, as she believed that some other U3A members may also be willing to participate in our research.

The study is investigating personality and perception. Participants watch a short (30-second) video and then answer some questions about what they have watched, and about their personality. The experiment is online, so can be completed in people's own homes at a time that is convenient to them. In total, the experiment takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.

I am also willing to give some detailed feedback on the aims and findings of the study once the data has been analysed. We have recently done a similar thing with local schools, and I think they enjoyed understanding more about how research is conducted at Universities.

I have provided the web address of the study below. Please feel free to click on this and have a look through the study before you make a decision.

http://colloff.warwick.ac.uk/expt/pandp_2/

A NIGHT OF MUSICAL THEATRE... 7.30 SATURDAY 22 NOVEMBER	
	<p>...with a touch of Christmas! Supported by and in tribute to the Barmouth Arts Festival, 40 years, we present STAGE 2 STAGE, a group of 15 amateur singers from Llangollen whose mission is to bring the glamour, vibrancy and magic of professional musical theatre to the Dragon stage! There'll be a little opera, screen music, even some pop and of course some festive favourites. Tickets: £12.50, BOOK SOON to reserve the best available seats!</p>

The Dragon Theatre
01341 281697

Gwynedd Challenge – ‘Have your say’

Gwynedd Council is facing vast cuts in the funding it receives from the government towards the cost of paying for local services. This means that there will be far less money available to pay for local services over the next few years. You are invited to join in the Gwynedd Challenge debate and have your say on the local services and council priorities that matter to you, your family and your community.

The questions being asked are:

- Of all the local services the Council provides, which service/services do you value the most? Please note up to three.
- Given that the Council must make cuts to the budget, which services would you be willing to see reduced in your area?
- Do you have any possible suggestions of how the Council can make substantial savings?

Gwynedd Council are holding ‘drop in’ sessions at Ty Siamas, Dolgellau on Thursday 27th November between 1.30 - 4.30pm or you may register for an evening meeting at 6 - 8pm at the same venue.

The Gwynedd Challenge web page www.gwynedd.gov.uk/GwyneddChallenge gives further information including a questionnaire for you to complete.

You may also register your details on line at www.gwynedd.gov.uk/RegisterGwyneddChallenge or phone on 01766 771 000

PUZZLE CORNER answers.

1. 1 knot.
2. Bosnia and Herzegovina.
3. Bertrand Russell.
4. Hinduism
5. Finland
6. 18th.
7. Roy Orbison.
8. Glandular fever (kissing disease).
9. A snake.
10. Necropolis

and finally,,,,,,,,,,,,,

I have been producing this Newsletter for four years now and wonder if anyone else would like to take over?

If you feel the urge to take on the job of Editor – just let me know.

Norma

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Please send contributions by 10 January 2015.**