



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE



PRIFYSGOL Y TRYDYDD OED

Barmouth U3A Newsletter Spring 2017

Welcome to the Spring issue of our newsletter.

You will see that included in this mailing is the notice of our AGM. With a couple of our existing committee members stepping down this is an opportunity for some of you to come forward and try the committee experience.

What does the committee do, I hear a chorus of potential volunteers ask! Well they run your U3A group, but given that we are a relatively small group this is not an onerous task, particularly as we are not, unlike larger U3A groups set up as a charity in our own name. This means that committee members do not have to become trustees like they would at the larger branches.

We meet every other month, meetings take about 90 minutes, typically covering finance, groups, upcoming events and issues arising from the North Wales Network (of which we are a member) and from the National Third Age Trust. Even if you have never done this sort of thing before, you will receive plenty of help, advice and support from the other members of the committee.

If you are interested you are welcome to give me a call if you want a chat and you will see from the form that you can even put your name forward on the day.

Last week Geraldine and I went to London to watch Chris De Burgh in concert at the London Palladium. A favourite of mine—I first saw him live more than 30 years ago—so even pre G! but I was also keen to visit the Palladium, a chance to see for real, a theatre I have seen on TV many, many times.

What a surprise, and a lesson in how TV can alter the view of things, I was really surprised how small the stage was, compared with the TV view and also how close (and again how small) the Royal box was. Still it was a beautiful theatre.

And another great CDeB concert.

Alan Vincent

Membership Renewals

Many of you have now renewed your membership, for which we thank you. If you have not received your card yet, it is on the way—we will ensure that we get them all out this month.

If you have not yet renewed then a reminder will be included with this Newsletter and we hope that you will attend to it as soon as possible.



Strollers Group

February: Tywyn

In order to fit in with the train times we had an early start for our February Strollers Walk at Tywyn with seven members travelling on the 8-50am train from Barmouth and a further three members joining us at Tywyn Railway station.



From the Station we set off down the High Street, passing the traffic chaos resulting from a convoy system imposed due to major road works in the area. On reaching the Cinema we turned left heading out of the town towards the Broad Water. From the long straight path we got views of Bird Rock, but unfortunately the hazy conditions restricted views of the more distant mountain.

Reaching the Broad Water there were birds and swans on the water, which we were told were nesting under the bridge further up the river. Following the path we crossed a narrow plank bridge, all managing to cross it safely with Tricia's help. This led us down onto the coast road which took us back towards the Town. From the railway crossing we made our way to the Sea Front finally coming to the Tallyllyn Railway Station.

Unfortunately on the day of our visit the Railway Museum was closed, but we all enjoyed a meal and a chat in the cafe before catching the 1-25pm train home.

March: Llandecwyn



Again taking advantage of the free winter train for our March Strollers Walk at Llandecwyn, our day started on the 10-00am train from Barmouth. After the short walk from the station to the village the walk followed the pylons up a gradual but quite long incline. We had told our Strollers that the uphill section would be worth it for the wonderful views from the top. Unfortunately we chose the wrong day for our walk with a heavy mist restricting the distant views so we had to use our imagination.

Following the pylons and stream the reasonable footpath made its way through the valley to Llyn Tecwyn Uchaf where we stopped for lunch at the end of the dam. The heavy mist still refused to clear in spite of quite a strong wind.

After lunch we made our way back towards St Tecwyn's Church, stopping briefly by Llyn Tecwyn Isaf to watch a post office van driving through the mud to negotiate a tight bend. We all expected him to get stuck, but no problems – he probably does it every day.

Our next stop was the interesting St Tecwyn's Church which was open and we spent



some time looking around the Church and graveyard. The mist had now started to lift and we got a taste of the views of Portmeirion, the estuary and the distant hills.

After exploring the church we headed back down the road to the village and station with time to spare before catching our train home. Everybody agreed that it was a walk well worth repeating when the weather conditions were more favourable.

April: Llanfachreth

A cool dry day for our April Stroll which Christine led for us at Llanfachreth. Twelve of us met at 10-00am in the car park next to Llanfachreth School, which is now closed. Setting off along the road we passed under the Stone Archway entrance to the Nannau Estate, passing a lovely house with fantastic views over the valley, to join a footpath which took us to the main Precipice Walk car park. Here we had our first break of the day with morning coffee at the provided picnic tables.



After a short break we joined the Precipice Walk path, first walking the length of Llyn Cynwch before taking the path to the right. Here our party split for a short distance with some members diverting up a steep embankment to view an ancient fort while the rest of our party continued on the lower path. We met up again at the view point

where Barmouth Bridge and the sea could be seen in the distance. Continuing along the Precipice Path we were surprised at the poor condition of the path considering that it is known as a tourist attraction for the area, however we all managed it safely. We then found the path down to the Old Copper Mine and after passing through a gate, found a sheltered spot, where we could sit on convenient tree stumps, for our lunch stop.

Following lunch we set off for the Old Copper Mine, negotiating two trees which had fallen across the path. After a short stop to look down on the ruins of the Old Copper Mine Workings we continued to the Forrest Garden which the Strollers Group last visited in May 2011. Here the many interesting trees are labelled with details of their characteristics. Also in the Forrest Garden we listened to the history lesson played on the "wind up" speaker at Deer's Leap.

The road back to our cars took us through Llanfachreth Village with its lovely old church and houses. An interesting resident came to talk to us as we admired his garden informing us of the history of the village.

Thank you Christine for a most enjoyable and interesting walk.

Book Group

We have had an enjoyable few months, reading a varied selection of books.

We are extremely grateful to our host, Glenys who entertains us with delicious cake and tea and coffee. We watch the birds on the multitude of feeders and generally put the world to rights. Then we discuss the book!

January we discussed an old favourite, *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens.

February *The Magic Toyshop* by Angela Carter

March *The Beekeeper's Apprentice* by Laurie King

April Another classic, *Cannery Row* by John Steinbeck

And finally, in **May**, we will be discussing *The Honk and Holler Opening Soon* by Billie Letts.

Most of these books have been available through the library but we do have hard copies of most of the titles, if anyone would like to dip into one, let me know and I will provide a copy.

Geraldine Vincent

Group Co-Ordinator

Firstly, "Thank You" to all who run the various groups. Without your knowledge and skills we would not be able to operate.

The Beginners Bridge is now on its holiday as the space is required for Bowling. Hopefully it will return in the autumn. Thanks to the success of this group we now have a flourishing Wednesday evening Bridge Group. All levels, and a bit of help if needed.

Digital Media, although due to other commitments has not been every month, but the meetings are so interesting. The question you were frightened to ask? Someone else does and Bingo.

Singing for fun is still going from strength to strength and it is rumoured they may start a second session also.

The new Writing Group has just started, we watch their endeavours with interest.

I feel all the groups are worthwhile and a credit to ourselves.

I am always willing to listen for new suggestions. We can work out numbers, costs and interest being shown.

Enjoy all the groups, keep fit and active. Brain and body needs a work out.

Geraldine Vincent

Singing For Fun

We are now well into our 10th year and still singing!!! During my absence in New Zealand the group was led by Nikki, thank you very much Nikki. In March I was greeted by a song which the group had rehearsed whilst I was away. "Welcome Home" was the beautifully sung song and I confess to being very moved by it.

We are considering the possibility of meeting twice a month, this won't be until the Autumn and we will need to sort out the logistics of day, time, venue etc., before we make a decision. Travel and access are always a problem in this area of poor public transport and a far flung membership.

Watch this space!!! New singers always welcome.

Evelyn Richardson

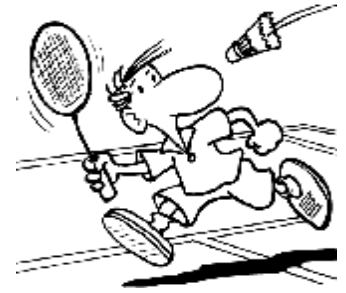
Short Net Tennis / Badminton

Many thanks for your continual support to Short Net Tennis and Badminton. It is pleasing to see so many turning up and enjoying themselves, without you all our clubs would fail.

Our star of every week is still JoJo, we love to see her and she is so very good, she knows us all, who she can sneak to for a fuss and who will send her back to her bed. We all love her.

I apologise for being absent for three weeks (due to family commitment). Don't worry I will be back to bully you soon!

Wendy



Walking Group

February was a bit of a damp squid when only Brian, Patch and myself turned up for the estate walk around Dolmelynlyn. So fair weather walkers you missed a good walk and the weather was passable. We went up to the Rhaeadr Falls which was the only real scramble but the view was perfect and the walk was completed on time.

Walk 2 was starting at the same village of Ganllwyd on a forest walk through Coed y Brenin. Twelve people and two local dogs. The day was dry and the right temp.

We Passed Dolgefeiliau farm and looked at the weather station there which is a hanging rock, a stop for lunch at the visitor centre which was packed with Bikers, Walkers and loads of dogs. There was some fine views of the Mawddach gorge and crossing the new foot bridge at Pont Caen y Coed was a delight.

Around Moelfre in **March** completed this on Monday. Eight humans and three dogs this time. The Met weather said heavy rain showers but we missed all this.

We had fine views of the Llyn Peninsula and the Rhinogs.

This was mostly a flat walk and a few inclines. We passed the ruins of the old coach house it was the old coach road between Harlech and Bontddu. It was not until 1798 that there was a route via Abermaw.

Peter Leyden

Table Tennis

Well we have survived another quarter.

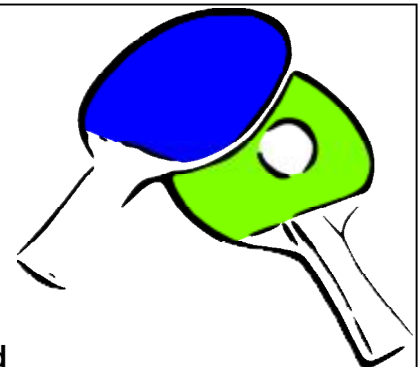
Our numbers are pretty stable and we always have three tables available, plus bats and balls.

The skills of all members have improved greatly but we do apologise to the adjacent Croquet club for our intrusion on to their pitches!!

The one hour work out is quite sufficient for most needs and a number of us then retire to a local café for an energy boosting drink. And chat!!

New members always welcome.

Geraldine Vincent



Let's Write

After a long time in the planning stage, the group got off to a good start on Thursday 20th April.

The meeting was held in Chris Kingshott's house in Llwyngwril and hopefully other meetings will be held in various members' houses in the area, in the afternoons of the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month.

The next meeting will be on Thursday afternoon 4th May.

Please contact Evelyn (01341 422125) or Chris (01341 251357) for exact venue.



There were only three of us present this time (with the promise of more next time) but nevertheless we enjoyed a stimulating couple of hours. The content of the first eight meetings was discussed and then we got down to business, with each of us reading a few paragraphs from one of our favourite books followed by a discussion of the particular writing skills of the illustrious authors, Steinbeck, Morpurgo and Dickens no less.

We then went on to two simple impromptu writing exercises, lasting a few minutes each. The first was to write for two minutes about whatever came into our heads and then five minutes about ourselves at that given moment in time, using all five senses.

When reading these out it was fascinating to hear the different interpretations of the subject matter. There was much discussion about why and what we want to write and about our modest achievements so far.

Homework was set for next time and we all agreed that the session had motivated and excited us and we couldn't wait to fire up our imaginations and get started.

Chris Kingshott 01341 251357

Monthly Meetings

February:

Eleri Lloyd from Mantell Gwynedd was the speaker in February. She began by explaining that social value support, advice and consultancy services to third sector organisations across Gwynedd and beyond is supplied by Mantell Gwynedd and they also help people to volunteer successfully.

There are 1800 third sector organisations on Mantel Gwynedd's database and it is pro-active amongst many other areas; working for the well being of communities health and social care, supporting vulnerable families, helping to reduce the demand on statutory services, giving practical support and advice and supporting good practice in all aspects of volunteering.

The afternoon was very informative but unfortunately the attendance at the meeting was very poor and apologies were given to the speaker for the presence of so few people.

March:

A very inspiring lady came to talk to our group in February. Buddug Jones is blind and so her beautiful companion Freya and Jan Wallace a volunteer for Guide Dogs for the blind accompanied her. (Freya is a guide dog!)

Jan, who volunteers for the local branch of the Guide Dogs, told us that there are 74 people with guide dogs in the Anglesey-Flint area. She accompanies Buddug to shows and helps to give information to the public.

Buddug lost her sight in her 30's but carried on working as a nursery nurse until her retirement in her 50's. She acquired Ivy, her first guide dog 13 years ago and after being reprimanded by the puppy trainer for speaking Welsh (Ivy was trained by an English speaker), they spent a very happy few years together until Ivy was retired at nine and a half years old.

The average working life of a guide dog is six to seven years and it costs just under £55,000 to support a guide dog from birth to retirement.

Now, Buddug has Freya and nothing fazes her. She travels on aeroplanes, dances, gives regular talks to children in schools and is a popular speaker with adult groups. She is constantly working for the charity and has many funny stories to tell about her experiences with her dogs over the years.

On Sunday 25th June she is actually going to travel down the Zip Wire Challenge at Zip World, in an old slate quarry in Bethesda, it's the biggest zip wire in Europe. Buddug will be strapped safely into a harness before travelling headlong in pairs, 500ft in the air, at a speed of 100mph. Now that is amazing, but even more amazing is that she will be doing it twice! Could you?

April:

A picture quiz about Barmouth was organised by Jacqui and the few people attending the meeting appeared to enjoy the afternoon.

This meeting was held in Parlwr Mawr, as the numbers attending these sessions is declining.

Again, however our numbers were low. A lot of work goes into arranging speakers for the meetings so please come along and support the efforts being put in.

Jacqui Puddle

Discussion Group

The meeting in **February** did not happen as only Dai and myself turned up.

March was better we had a very good discussion on Neurosexism.

It started with the statement by Cordelia Fine that, 'Neurosexism is the sexist assumption that gender differences perceived in character and behaviour are caused by biological differences in the brains'.

Those who support the view that there is a difference between male and female brains and that in using a biological determinist approach explain women's inferiority or unsuitability for certain roles. That explains why children from a young age are pushed in different gender roles even down to the colours given to them. Furthermore females are seen as passive and made to take up roles such as caring and being the main provider of childcare.

In many parts of the world women are seen as second class and controlled by the dominant male society. So it is true that women are the slave of slaves in the economic system we have.

Pete Leyden



POETRY IN THE PEWS

On Wednesday 10th May at 7 pm in Holy Trinity Church, Penrhyndeudraeth, there will be an evening of favourite poems and contemporary poetry. John Rowlands will read and discuss work from his book 'Knots of Sands', which is in haiku and senryu form.

All welcome to bring along a poem to read and talk about.
£3 including refreshments.

Contact Angela Swann on 01766 770686 for more details.

Barmouth Bridge Save the Date!

2017 sees the 150th anniversary of the opening of Barmouth Bridge.

Over the weekend of

14th/15th October 2017

there'll be events held in Barmouth to celebrate this iconic bridge.



We will keep you up to date with the details as they are published, but for now just put it in your diary!

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The Summer newsletter will be published end of July.
Please submit your contributions by **10th July**.