



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE



PRIFYSGOL Y TRYDYDD OED

# Barmouth U3A Newsletter Summer 2015

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter. This is the first one to be edited by myself, following Norma's great stint over the last few years, something I will have to match up to.

I originally agreed to take on this role earlier last year as my 3 years as Chairman of Barmouth U3A was coming to an end and I had expected to have managed to hand over some tasks to a new Chairman.

However, as those of you who were at the AGM will know, nobody has volunteered to take on the role of Chairman, so I am continuing for a further year, albeit officially as Vice-Chairman. This also explains why there is not a separate "Chairman's Report" in this Newsletter.

Organisations like the U3A do need a committee to operate and that committee needs Officers to fulfil various roles, but for Barmouth U3A, with a membership of only around 110, these roles are not that onerous and there is an extensive background of experience and knowledge available to support anybody who feels they would like to join the committee. This committee only meets every other month, basically to review activities, monitor the financial position and to agree on any non group proposals/activities such as the Merioneth Show stand or the Dolgellau Health day activity.

The role of the Chairman in the organisation is two-fold. First to be the "face" of the organisation within the area and to represent Barmouth U3A at various events/meetings, such as the current Barmouth "Pilot" activity and the U3A North Wales Network Meetings (3 a year). Secondly the Chairman runs the bi-monthly committee meetings—an easy role given how well our current committee behave.

You can see therefore, that we need more volunteers to join the committee and we particularly need someone who will be willing to fulfil the Chairman role. I have done "my bit" and it needs someone new—but I am more than willing to provide extensive support to a new Chairman, by staying on as Vice-Chairman at the next AGM.

The U3A "motto" is "LEARN, LAUGH AND LIVE!". Why not LEARN how to be a Chairman. It'll certainly be a LAUGH whilst you LIVE out the role!

*Alan Vincent*

# Book Group

The July meeting of the Book Group welcomed two new members to our discussion of various ghost stories which had been read by individuals. These books were *The Woman in Black*; *Turn of the Screw*; *The Haunting of Hill House*; *Edith Wharton's Ghost Stories*; and *The Little Stranger*.



Readers claimed to have enjoyed their chosen books, if 'enjoyed' is the correct word for events including demonic eyes at the foot of a bed, fiendish faces pressed to a window pane, vengeful harridans and numerous characters crashing into trees with fatal results.

We noted a common thread running through much of this material – friendless or solitary people or those suffering some tragic loss or trauma who, in their vulnerable condition, were especially sensitive to their surroundings. These were principally forbidding and isolated Gothic-style houses where things went bump in the night.

NB: Nothing should be read into an item falling from the mantelpiece where we gathered. It was just the wind.... Honest!

August book is: *Gone to Earth*, Mary Webb published 1917.

September book is: *The Love Song of Queenie Hennessey* by Rachel Joyce. A sequel to *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*.

*Sylvia Hayworth*

## Barmouth??

.....let us first of all examine, and if possible derive, the word *Barmouth*, which is surely an ugly and meaningless name for so pretty a spot. First of all then, the town was called *Abermawddach* or *Abermaw* from the Welsh word *Aber* denoting "efflux," and *Mawddach* or *Maw* the name of the river. This was abbreviated by the Welsh into *Abermo*, hence into *Bermaw*, and ultimately into *Bermo*. The latter term then became anglicized into *Barmouth*, but the natives still speak of *Abermaw* or *Bermo*.

There is a legend in current circulation of the cause of its being so called. It is said that at a meeting of the masters of the vessels of the Port, held in an alehouse, in 1768, it was decided, in consideration of the increase of the shipping, to adopt an English name to put on to the sterns of the vessels. One old salt, who deemed himself very proficient in the English language, proposed to transform *Abermaw* into *Barmouth*.

At first the new term was greatly scorned, some mariners contending that since there were two bars, there ought to be two mouths, but others disputed the fact that a bar could have a mouth at all. However, in spite of much derision, *Barmouth* was the name adopted.

Though doubtless a pleasing story, the truth of this tradition cannot be vouched for. There is abundant evidence to prove that the name is of much earlier date than 1768. In an old edition of "Camden's Britannica," printed in 1637, is an old map where the town is called by its present name of *Barmouth*. Robert Vaughan, the Hengwrt antiquary who died in 1666, says: "*Abermawddach*, usually called *Abermaw*, in English *Barmouth*, [is] a haven town." Should further proof be wanting we have a warrant of Charles the First, which, issued in 1637, gives Thomas Bushell permission to work the Clogau Gold Mines at Bontddu "situate near *Barmouth*."

Reproduced from *History of Barmouth and Vicinity*, by E. Rosalie Jones (1909)

## Lunch Group

A group of us meet for lunch at the Coleg Meirion Dwyfor restaurant in Dolgellau, usually on the third Thursday of the month (College holidays may mean a change of date). We are a very loyal group, we obviously enjoy each others company as well as the excellent 2/3 course meal and coffee. Cost Two course and coffee £9, Three course and coffee £10.50 (2014-2015 prices).

In June we ventured further – to Llanuwchllyn – one of our members, Judith, who lives in the village, invited us for coffee and we had an opportunity to see her lovely garden, before moving on to The Eagles, where we had an excellent lunch. July we decided to meet at the Y Sospan in Dolgellau at 12.30.

We extend a very warm welcome to you to join us.

*Rhiannon Roberts*

### Barmouth U3A members win Volunteer awards

Two of our members have recently been awarded Certificates for their **Outstanding Contribution as Volunteers in the Wales Volunteer of the Year Awards 2015.**

Evelyn Richardson was awarded her's for her work with the U3A and Danny Jones for his work with Barmouth Music.

Congratulations to them both.

### Mawddach Paddle Sports Festival

Next years festival will be held on the 25th and 26th of June and Barmouth U3A will be part of the support team for the event. We have agreed to provide volunteers to assist in the control of the traffic around the harbour over the weekend.

Your committee are pleased to be associated with this very successful festival organised by the Mawddach Rotary Club.

### Singing For Fun

The group remains enthusiastic and attendance varies but we should cover our costs. Room hire regularly goes up and the pianist costs have gone up for the first time since we began nearly eight years ago.

We are excited about being the support act for the Jazz night at Christmas but somewhat nervous as this is such a well attended night and the bands and soloists of a very high standard. Already the group have made suggestions about what we should get the audience singing and I'm sure it will be fun for all.

We are not meeting in August this year as I have family coming and going throughout that month but we'll be back in September the third Wednesday of the month as usual . Enjoy the Summer!

*Evelyn Richardson*

# Discussion Group

In **April** we had a debate on what would be the outcome of the May 7<sup>th</sup> General Election and hope for the future, the consensus was there would not be an overall majority, how wrong we were.

We looked at the 1945 election that led to a Labour victory that came from below, those who wanted change and no return to the 1930s.

There had been no general election since 1935 and six years of war had made people more radical for change and the Labour party was their party to put it into practice. Labour won 393 seats against the Tories a majority of nearly 200 seats. Herbert Morrison made the point that we needed a national plan for peace as was *“done to win The war or allow the press and sluggish leaders of big business Monopolies and cartels to sit comfortably on our backs for another Shameful period of national decline.”*

Labour went on to create the National Health service and one fifth of British industry was socialised and revitalised.

The **May** meeting was to discuss the aftermath of the General Election. Well the Tories won with a small majority and the collapse of the Liberals. It seems that if you want to win the votes of the working class, you do not put a soft Tory programme forward, the masses will not vote or go for parties like UKIP. We have may have five years of the nasty party, but as Shelley said “we are the many they are the few”.

In **June** we discussed The English Revolution.

The events of 1640 to 1660 were to change society from one dominated by feudalism led by Charles 1st and a Parliament who opposed the old Feudal restrictions and taxes on new wealth. For them to have semi-Catholic forms of church hierarchy and idolatry undermined the Puritan Reformation that had begun when Henry VIII broke with the Catholic Church.

The revolutionaries of the 17<sup>th</sup> century used the Bible as their text for revolt. Puritanism stressed individual relationship, based on conscience, between humans, the Bible and God.

There were three civil wars in the ten years of conflict between 1640 and 1649, out of that grow a new type of army, the new model army that made it's leaders on merit rather than on birth as in the Royalist camp.

This revolution threw up a whole number of radical groups such as The Levellers, Seekers, Ranters and the Quakers who came from the Seekers tradition.

Under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell and with the execution of Charles in 1649 for a few years England became a Republic, but even with the Restoration of the Royalty showed that Cromwell and his forces had got rid of the old feudal system and paved the way for capitalist democracy which only became universal in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, at least as a political model.

Read Christopher Hill—The English Revolution and The World Turned Upside Down.

If you are in London there is a statue of Oliver Cromwell outside The Houses of Parliament, also halfway down Whitehall lies the Banqueting House where King Charles I was executed.

*Peter Leyden*



## Group Co-ordinators Report

We have had as many as 13 groups going this season.

A new Singing for Fun was initiated by request at Fairbourne but due to lack of numbers this has now ceased. The Dragon Theatre meeting is still in full force.

I recently visited a new branch which has only been going 3 months, already has a membership of nearly 200 and 26 groups.

Following on from the results from questionnaires completed I am looking to establish an 'Outing' group – although it may only be small and car sharing. We could then go to Harlech or Dolgellau for an event or even the Christmas Pantomime at Aberdovey (Floor of stage permitting).

IT skills are constantly being requested but the requirements are very varied and at different levels so difficult to encompass in one group. I am working on this one. Group events are fun, fulfilling and everybody gets something out of them. Look at the last page of the September diary and maybe try something new for the winter.

*Geraldine Vincent*

## Walking Group

**April** saw 10 people and 2 dogs climb Diffwys the back way.

It had been agreed that the more direct route was better in terms of time and effort. The Recci a week before had been done in very poor weather conditions, low cloud and poor visibility, a seven and half mile walk took nearly 8 hours rather than the six and half stated, but we did it with the help of Brian and his tablet that had OS maps on it.

The Monday we went as a group started quite wet but improved as we ascended. The sun came out and we had wonderful views of the Rhinogs and crossing the Hirgwm valley which has the old stage coach road from Harlech to Dolgellau, on the top we had views not only the Llyns but could see the Arans and Cadair Idris to the south.

In **May** we went on a more relaxed walk, the New Precipice Walk starting from the old bridge in Llanelltyd, it was mainly a forest track walk until we got to Foel Ispri where there is old mine tramways that were used to serve the long abandoned workings of Voel goldmine. Although it was heavy underfoot the views at the top were worth it.

**June** saw 12 of us with our two regular walking dogs go from Glanllwyd carpark by the river Gamlan up to Friog farm house and Penrhos Isaf. This was all forest and some pathways and took about three and half hours. Penrhos Isaf is a bothy maintained by the Mountain Bothies Association for use by walkers. Two weeks before it had been quite dry and no problem entering the forest but due to recent rain within seconds of stopping for lunch at this house we sat down outside and were attacked by midges, so everyone moved very fast into the house. We completed the walk but made the decision to avoid the gorge with a very steep drop to the right of the path.

*Peter Leyden*

# Strollers Group

## April: Barmouth to Llanaber

Our April Strollers Walk took us on a circular route from Barmouth to Llanaber starting with the rather strenuous climb up the Mynach Road steps to the Flag and Cairn which is a monument to the Birmingham Soldiers. With several stops to admire the views and catch our breath, we all made it to the top, with another short rest while we took in the distant views.



A short walk from the monument brought us to the Gell-fechan ruins where we found shelter from the rather strong wind while we had a drinks break. The ruins were lived in and used as a Guest House until the late 1950's but left because there was no electricity.

From here we continued upwards, joining the "Ardudwy Way" in a northerly direction. Passing some National Park Rangers, busy replacing rotten gateposts, we stopped to enquire how they had managed to get their vehicle up the path. They admitted that it was "a bit tight at times". We made our lunch stop at the base of an Iron Age Hill Fort, although there was not a lot to be seen other than piles of stones which gave us shelter from the wind. Continuing along the "Ardudwy Way" we came to a sign for Barmouth and then one for Llanaber Church, both written on stones in the walls. This led us down to the main road coming out near Llanaber Church. A short walk along the road and round the graveyard brought us to a wooden footbridge over the railway line. Following the footpath brought us onto the beach and promenade with sea views.

The walk finished by following the stream through Wern Mynach past the pond and up the steps to Tan y Bryn where Tea, coffee and cakes were served on the patio in the sunshine.

## May: To Tanygrisiau from Dduallt

The May Strollers Walk combined a short ride on the Ffestiniog Railway with a walk from Dduallt to Tanygrisiau. Twelve of us met at Tan-y-Bwlch Station where we



discussed our planned walk with another Barmouth U3A member who was on a different walk. We were advised to take an alternative route to that intended due to "boggy paths" on the original route. Arriving at Dduallt we first walked up to a view-point within the "Spiral Loop" used by the Ffestiniog railway to gain height before the lake at Tanygrisiau. At the centre of the view-point a stone pedestal gave information on the surrounding mountains. After admiring the views we retraced our steps, passing an

unusual house with painted windows, to Dduallt Station.

From the Station the footpath to Tanygrisiau was signposted. This was a good path and shorter than the original intended route. We therefore arrived at Tanygrisiau earlier than expected and so decided to save our sandwiches for later and eat at the Lakeside Cafe. We all descended on the cafe and were soon served with our meals which we enjoyed in the warm while looking out on the views across the lake.

After our lunch we still had over an hour before our train back was due, so Trish led us on an additional walk along the dam, and then back through the village to the station just in time to catch the 3-10pm train back to Tan-y-Bwlch.

Again the weather had stayed fine for an enjoyable walk which everybody said they had enjoyed.

## June: Bala Caves

As promised by the weather forecast we had a lovely day with blue skies and sunshine for our most interesting June Strollers Walk at Bala. Most of us started our day with a bus ride on the 9-50am T3 bus from Barmouth to Bala. Others joined us at the meeting place in front of Bala Cinema.



The walk began with a stroll past the end of Bala Lake to join the river walk, taking us from Bala Lake to the junction of the River Dee with the River Tryweryn where the flow of water from Llyn Celyn is carefully controlled to allow white-water sports further upstream.

Continuing along the path brought us into the town where we took a detour to "Tomen y Bala", one of the largest medieval castle mottes in Wales with a

base of 40 metres by 16 metres and 8 metres high. Here we had a "drinks break" while we took in the distant views over the surrounding hills and town, as far as Bala College which we were told was built in 1867 using stone taken from the Bala Caves which we were to visit later.

After a short walk across the town with its quaint cottages, we headed to the hills where we found a suitable place on a grass bank for our lunch stop in the brilliant sunshine.

Below our "lunch site" were the Bala Caves. As we walked through the caves, everybody was amazed at how extensive they were and the way that pillars had been left to support the roof (well worth the visit to see them).

We then made our way back into Bala town in time for a refreshing drink and chat sitting in the sun, before catching the 2-56pm bus back to Barmouth.



*John & Trish Percival*

## Film Group

The Film Group has enjoyed a varied season of films with **North By Northwest** in April, **Brighton Rock** in May through to **Dead of Night** in June and finally **Cabaret** in July.

Unfortunately our numbers are not currently high enough to sustain the group when we come to renew our licence in the new year.

Hopefully we see an increase in numbers in September when we will be showing **Chinatown** starring Jack Nicholson and Faye Dunaway.

We may also consider an evening timing, what do you think?

*Alan Vincent*



## Monthly Meetings

### May

After the business part of the AGM had ended, Sally Kirkham was introduced as the speaker. Her aim was to bring relaxation and fun to the meeting. Once everyone had discarded their inhibitions all present enjoyed an interesting and lively afternoon and left the meeting feeling very relaxed.

### June

Glenda Molloy Community Coordinator for Gwynedd began her talk about the Wales Air Ambulance by showing a short video demonstrating some of the work done by the helicopter crews.

She told the meeting that The Wales Air Ambulance was launched in Swansea on St. David's Day 2001 and there are now three Helimed crews based in Caernarfon, Welshpool and Swansea working seven days a week.

Each crew has one pilot and two advanced life support paramedics who are trained in the latest techniques in pre-hospital emergency care to ensure the patient receives the most effective treatment.

Consultant-level doctors have joined critical care practitioners for shifts on the charity's helicopters, helping to provide even more treatments on air ambulance missions. The specially-selected team of doctors have advanced expertise in emergency medicine, paediatrics, anaesthesia and intensive care.

The Air Ambulances respond to over 2,000 callouts every year at a cost of £1500 each. Response time is very quick, usually 12-15 minutes to arrive on the scene and 15 minutes to deliver to hospital if necessary.

The paramedics and doctors are paid by the NHS but the £6.5million necessary to run the Helimeds annually, depends wholly on donations from the public and does not receive any funding from the government or the national lottery.

It was a very interesting thought provoking afternoon and reassuring to know that there is a wealth of medical expertise only 15 minutes away should we be unfortunate enough to need it.

### July

The attendance at July's meeting was poor due possibly to Andy Murray playing tennis at Wimbledon. For our speaker we had Darren Walters the PCSO for Barmouth and Harlech and what a breath of fresh air he was. His delivery was relaxed,



interactive and extremely interesting.

Prior to moving to Harlech two and a half years ago and becoming a PCSO (Police Community Support Officer) Darren had experienced a varied, exciting and challenging life living all over the world.

He told us all about the selection process – 3,000 applicants for 10 jobs in North Wales, his training and what it is like walking the beat in Barmouth. PCSO's do not have powers of arrest, cannot interview prisoners or carry out the high risk tasks of police officers but they are visible, accessible and a familiar uniformed presence. They deal with minor offences and support frontline policing with house-to-house enquiries, providing crime prevention advice, and guarding crime scenes. They are equipped with a protective stab vest and handcuffs; Gwynedd is the only force where PCSO's carry handcuffs. Darren is looking to progress to becoming a PC in the future.

Darren told us to call 101 if we need non-urgent help from the police, mark our property and keep serial numbers of our possessions. Call on him if you would like any advice. He is more than willing to assist.

A very enjoyable afternoon, enjoyed by all present and over too quickly.

*Jacqui Puddle*

## **North Wales Association of U3As Theme Day**

(Organised by Anglesey and Dyffryn Conwy U3As)

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015 at Glasdir Centre, Llanrwst LL26 0DF

**It's Good to be Green – North Wales Renewable Energy Projects**

Delegates arrive from 9.45 am for registration and refreshment

**10.30 – 10.45**

Welcome & Housekeeping Announcements followed by Opening Remarks

Hilary Jones, Chairman North Wales U3As Association

**10.45 – 11.45**

Dr James Walmsley, Bangor University

An Introduction to Renewable Energy

**11.45 – 12.45**

Gavin Gatehouse, Chair, Anafon Energy Hydro Scheme

Abergwyngregyn

**12.45 – 14.15 LUNCH**

**14.15 – 15.15**

Dr John Idris Jones, Programme Director

Anglesey Energy Island

**15.15 – 16.15**

Tidal Lagoon Project, Colwyn Bay

**16.15 – 16.30**

Words of Thanks, Ross McKay, Bangor U3A

followed by Closing Remarks, Hilary Jones

If you are interested in attending this event please give your name to Alan Vincent  
(01341 247415) by 10th September.

The cost is £12 per person to include a light lunch.

*There is still time to enter the National U3A  
Photography Competition:*



## Photography Competition 2015 BRITAIN'S WILDLIFE

*The competition will be judged by Amateur Photographer magazine.*

### Competition Rules

- The closing date of the competition is 31<sup>st</sup> August 2015.
- Photographs must be in colour, and submitted digitally.
- The subject must be the wildlife of Britain.
- Entries may be submitted by using the online form in the Members' Area of the website ([www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)) or by email to [photo@u3a.org.uk](mailto:photo@u3a.org.uk), but if neither of these are possible, you may mail a CD to the National Office.
- Photographers must submit their own photographs, accompanied by their name, their U3A and a description of the subject.
- Entries must be supplied as high quality JPEG files with a minimum resolution of 1,600 pixels on the shortest edge.
- Entering photographs into this competition constitutes your agreement to grant The Third Age Trust a non-exclusive, royalty-free licence to reproduce, distribute, and publicly display the photographs you submit in any Trust publication.
- Each member may enter a maximum of three photographs.

The winning photographer will receive a year's subscription to *Amateur Photographer* magazine and a gift token. Three runners-up will also receive gift tokens. The photographs will be featured on the website, and announced in the November issue of *Third Age Matters*.



## Badminton

My thanks to everyone for your support over the last few months. It is encouraging that sometimes there are sufficient members enabling us to cover two courts. Special thanks to Geoff and Pauline for bringing our favourite member Jojo most weeks who we all adore and by her behaviour enjoys her sporting experience!

The new "season" commences on Friday, 4th September, usual time and place (2-00pm at Barmouth Leisure Centre) although I will not be able to join you for the first 2 weeks since I shall be in France (lucky me!). Of course, as always, new members are always welcomed.

May I take this opportunity to thank Norma for past editorial efforts and hard work in producing the Newsletters and to Alan for "picking up the pencil".

*Wendy Bramley*



The out going National Chairman, Barbara Lewis has initiated the Great U3A Awareness Campaign aimed at making the U3A more “visible” nationally, and locally, in order that it continues to develop as a successful organisation. As part of this I thought it would be interesting for members to see an element of the campaign:

### ***Cherish Today, Challenge Tomorrow!***

10 things you and your members can do to participate in the Great U3A Awareness Campaign

1. Collect and recycle Third Age Matters to GP surgeries, dental practices, libraries, beauty salons etc.
  2. Email snippets from your newsletter to local press, local radio stations, the Mature Times.
  3. Write letters to the editor of magazines, national and local press whenever they print an article on loneliness, or to just praise U3A. Email or write to your newly elected MP to congratulate them and make them aware of U3A.
  4. For those members with a Twitter Account – post a simple tweet: “A shout-out for a great organisation–@U3A\_UK”.
  5. For those members on Facebook – a simple line that states: “Proud to be a U3A member”.
  6. Give all your members a bookmark or two to hand out.
  7. Make sure the businesses, schools, and hospitals in your community know about U3A for their retirees.
  8. Check that local government (Parish Councils, County Councils etc) have U3A listed on their websites and in their newsletters.
  9. Posters – community bulletin boards in supermarkets, garden centres, newsagents, post offices, libraries, community centres.
  10. Keep doing all the wonderful things you already are to make U3A known in your Community.
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## **The Barmouth Sea-Bridge**

by Charles Tennyson Turner

When the train cross'd the sea, 'mid shouts of joy,  
And the huge sea-pillars dash'd away the tide,  
Awhile the power of song seem'd vague, beside  
Those vast mechanics, mighty to convoy  
A length of cars high over flood and ooze;  
But the brief thought was feeble and unwise:  
No season'd oak is stronger than the Muse,  
For all the great cross-beams, and clamps, and ties.  
Brave songs may raise a people sore-deprest,  
And knit its strength together for the strife  
With foreign foes, or subtle statesman's art:  
Sweet hymns have lifted many a dying heart  
Above the world, and sped the passing life  
Across the waters, to the land of rest!



## Bridge Group

The Bridge Group continues enthusiastically on Wednesday evenings through out the summer. For those of you who would like to learn the game look out for details of our new season of taster and refresher sessions later in the year.

*Christina Cook*

## Merioneth Show

Taking place on the 26th August at Harlech, Barmouth U3A will be joining Porthmadog U3A on a small stand in the Mantell Gwynedd marquee. If you are attending the show why not call in and say hello!



## Table Tennis

Another successful season.

We are regularly getting 12 people to play. The three tables are being well used and we have a mix of singles, doubles, mixed and by gender.

We had one invitation to play with the Porthmadog group at Blaenau Festiniog and hope to arrange our own tournament during the winter.

There is a lot of hilarity and good humour. We are not having to run quite so far these days to retrieve missed balls. All members have progressed extremely well. Beginners in particular are now showing good skills.

As always everybody is welcome. Friday at noon in the Leisure Centre.

*Geraldine Vincent*

## Barmouth U3A, Officers 2015/16

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Vacancy

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