



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE



PRIFYSGOL Y TRYDYDD OED

# Barmouth U3A Newsletter Summer 2016

Welcome to the Summer issue of our newsletter

Well here we are again – first newsletter after the AGM – and I am once again the Chairman! How did that happen I ask myself, yes it's an honour but I would be quite happy to pass the honour on if I could find anybody to pick it up.

Anyway we carry on, but we do need a couple of members to join the committee, after Bronwen and Norma stood down at the AGM. Give me a call if you are remotely interested and I will describe how easy it is!

Barmouth U3A supported the Paddle Sports event on the weekend of 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> June by acting as "Road Marshalls". It was pretty enjoyable with lots of interaction and chat with both visitors and locals. The weather on the Sunday wasn't great but overall I found it an absorbing activity. Thanks to Val Vine, David Holloway, Janet Griffith and Nikki Dudley who all helped out at various times over the weekend.

Below you will see that I was one of 4 members who were recognised by the Mawddach Rotary for their contribution to the community. Very nice to get recognised in such a way by your friends and colleagues.

Having done European railways over the last couple of years, Geraldine and I decided to do England (or at least some of it) this year, so: Talybont to Scarborough to Great Yarmouth to London to St. Ives to Kidderminster to Talybont over 14 days. A total of 18 different trains with 13 connections to be made. Every single one on time and no problems at all. I know the railways get a lot of stick at times but it's a great way to travel when it all goes right, as it did for us.

*Alan Vincent*



At a recent Oscars' Night of the Mawddach Rotary Club, our Chairman, Alan Vincent, was presented with an Oscar for his work with U3a and the community.

It was a fun filled evening with bling, feather boas and the film Bridge of Spies.

Three other Barmouth U3a members were similarly honoured for their work in the community:

**Beryl Clark , Rob Clark and Val Vine.**

**Well Done to All**

# Strollers Group

## May: Caernarfon

Unfortunately the date of our May Strollers Walk coincided with a day when many of our regular strollers were preoccupied with other events and only four managed the walk together with two who joined us for the ride on the Welsh Highland Railway.

The convenient bus service took us to Caernarfon, arriving at 10-30am for our walk. Our first stop was the Welsh Highland Station to purchase our tickets for later in the day. Although we had used the footpath down to the station previously, this time we encountered a fallen tree which we all managed to struggle through.

Tickets bought, we proceeded to make our way over the bridge to "Ben Twthill" which rises up above Caernarfon with exceptional views of Anglesey, the Menai Straits, Snowdon Mountain Range and over the town. At the top is the "Caernarfon Boer War Memorial", which was erected by public subscription in memory of those from Caernarfon who died serving their country in the South African War 1899-1902. It takes the form of a Wheel Cross mounted on a tapering shaft on a three-tiered plinth with twenty four names listed. At the top we had a break while we ate Chocolate Doughnuts kindly bought for us by Dave. Thank you Dave.

Back down the hill we crossed a different bridge over the bypass bringing us to the Harbour. Finding a sheltered spot under the Castle Walls we had our lunch looking down the Menai Straits. After a quick coffee at the Tafarn y Porth (Wetherspoons) we had a brisk walk on the other side of the river, coming back through the park in time to catch our train from the Station.



The nice relaxing ride, with drinks served at our table, brought us back to Porthmadog where we caught our bus home. It was a shame that many of our usual Strollers missed a most interesting day.

## June: Morfa Nefyn

Our June Strollers Walk was to be a full day out, with transport to Morfa Nefyn either by bus or car and a beach walk passing the well known Ty Coch (pub on the beach). Six members went by car and eight of us travelled on the three very convenient buses changing at Porthmadog and Pwllheli (where we had time for a quick drink at Wetherspoons), to meet up at Morfa Nefyn.

The day had started rather wet, passing through heavy rain as we travelled on the bus. As we reached Morfa Nefyn the rain stopped and thankfully it remained dry for our walk.



After taking the obligatory photographs of our group we set off down to the beach. As we walked along the beach we watched the Sand-Martin birds going in and out of holes which appeared as if they had been drilled in the sandy cliffs. After passing a rather muddy patch, where the cliffs had fallen near some holiday cottages, we came to Ty Coch (The Pub on the Beach). Here we were able to get refreshments and sit on the sands while we ate our lunch.

Continuing our walk along the coast, passing the small museum, the impressive new Lifeboat Station at Porthdinllaen came into view. Since it was open to visitors we stopped a while to admire the boat. To the side of the Lifeboat Station was a small jetty. From the end of the jetty we were able to view the Lifeboat Station as if from the sea. A short walk across the Golf Course brought us to a view-point from where we were able to watch the Seals and Cormorants on the rocks.



Retracing our steps brought us onto the path across the top of the cliffs, a most attractive section of our walk through the Golf Course with water on both sides and lovely coastal views. This took us back to where we had started the walk.

Since we had time before our bus was due and the rain had just returned we went in the "Caffi Porthdinllaen" for a drink. The return bus turned up on time and again the three buses linked up well to get us back to Barmouth for 5-00pm.

Despite the wet start to the day we didn't get wet and the lovely walk was enjoyed by everyone.

### July: Blue Lake

After all the recent wet weather we were expecting a wet, muddy walk for our July Stroll to Blue Lake in the Goleuwern Slate Quarry above Fairbourne. Instead we had perfect weather, with only a little mud, for our walk which was led by Christine.



Most of us travelled to Fairbourne Station by train where we met up with Christine to start our walk. From the Station Christine led us up a steep flight of steps and through a farm yard, then across fields with sea views over Fairbourne before dropping down to the start of the main path up to Blue Lake at Fford Panteinion.

The approach to Blue Lake is a steep climb offering further views over the valley and Fairbourne. Due to the recent heavy rain the path under the old slate bridges had become a stream. By making use of the raised rocks as stepping stones, we managed to get through

without getting our feet wet. The path continued through the old mine workings to the top where we had a short break to admire the views before going through the tunnel to Blue Lake.

Through the dark wet tunnel brought us to Blue Lake which didn't disappoint, looking even bluer than when last seen. Opinions seem to differ for cause of the blue colour, some saying it is due to dissolved minerals while others have said that it is due to the diffraction of light and the great depth. Here we stopped for lunch while we watched the fish in the clear blue water and rock climbers way above us.

Continuing the walk upwards we came across a house, at the highest point of the walk, having fantastic views and an outside map showing the distances to various locations. Travelling downhill we passed a large cage which we were told was used for breeding pheasants although none could be seen.

Back at our starting point with an hour to spare before catching the train back, Christine kindly offered us drinks in the garden at her home nearby. This brought an end to a very enjoyable day. Thank you Christine for the walk and drinks – you have a lovely garden.



## Film Group

**May** saw us watching, what is generally regarded as one of the best films of all time, Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane*.

This was followed in **June** by the classic Ealing Comedy *The Lady Killers*.

Unfortunately whilst our June numbers were good, in general the numbers coming along to watch these films has not been sufficient to cover the costs of putting them on and we have therefore decided to take a break. We will have a think about ways that we might improve attendances and possibly try again in a few months time.



## Book Group

**May: *Regeneration* by Pat Barker (1991)**

This is the first part of a trilogy and is based on real events during the First World War at a hospital – 'Craig Lockhart' – in Scotland, where two famous war poets are being treated.

Their Doctor, W H R Rivers, was a noted psychologist who looked for more effective methods of treating shell-shock and stress than the cruder practices and ECT more widely used.

The poets were Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon the latter a serving officer having spoken out against the war, which didn't go down well with his superiors. Rather than be punished for throwing away his medals and blatant disobedience, Sassoon finally agreed to undergo 'treatment' at Craig Lockhart. This came about because yet another writer and war poet, Robert Graves, a friend of Sassoon, pulled strings to arrange a Medical Board where Graves spoke emotionally in support of care and psychological help.

Other fictitious patients are described and the horrors they have suffered on the battlefield and their subsequent behaviour. The author describes this very well so that we could visualise the dreadful circumstances, especially the eye ball stuck in a duckboard, or a soldiers exploding abdomen, but this is not done in a sensationalist way. It is a part of long discussions between Rivers and his patients, sympathetically teasing out their feelings and helping them to come to terms with life afterwards.

Other strands in the narrative include a romance between a patient and a munitions worker whose hair and skin are yellow because of the explosives with which she works. Also the collaboration of Wilfred Owen and Sassoon on Owen's poem: 'Anthem for Doomed Youth'. These events are speculative on Barkers part, but very credible.

We found this a well-written book, full of interest and fascinating information, throwing light on a lesser-known part of The Great War. It was made into a well-regarded film in 1997.

*Sylvia Heyworth*

**June:**

The book group was hosted on June 1st at Lletywyn in the garden which was sunny though breezy at times. The four of us able to attend, (Evelyn, Kathleen, Glynis and Denise) discussed gardening, plants, the weather and what made a book a "good read". Unfortunately only one of us had been able to get hold of the book of the month so we all talked about different genres, authors, styles etc. It was a lot of fun, and thank you for coming. We missed everyone else and the next book group will be back at Sylvia's house.

*Denise Taylor*



## July: In the Midst of Life by Ann Otway (2015)

We read this after its author approached us, (and subsequently joined our July meeting), wondering whether we would be interested in her debut novel set in Aberdovey. Not only did we enjoy reading about familiar places, including Fairbourne lavatories, but one of our group had actually been taught Welsh by Ann's father many years ago in evening classes. We won't go into catching local eels and selling them for sixpence. So it was a very jolly gathering, a full complement near enough, plus a very welcome new member of our U3a.

The book's cover says it is a tale of 'Mystery, Romance and the Supernatural' and we were not disappointed. The supernatural starts very early on with the sketch of a young girl weeping real tears and waking the household at night with her sobs. This may sound a touch 'twilight zone' but amazingly it was a similar event which gave Ann the idea for her novel, when one of her husband's sketches seemingly did that. (This is the picture used on the front cover).



In discussing the book we made comments such as: 'sometimes bland'; 'some confusion over time/place; why didn't the police do more? and 'ultra-descriptive when introducing rooms', so it was good to be able to discuss and explore the reservations with Ann herself. She explained that she was describing her own childhood home in Aberdovey, so it was obviously very close to her heart, and also that she didn't want to get into the realms of police procedure and turn it into a detective novel. That would have taken her research into a whole new direction. It was fascinating to hear how much research is necessary – when was the teenage magazine 'Jackie' first published? Can Bison burgers really be consumed near Corwen? When was The Cors y Gedol in Barmouth a functioning hotel? Readers are keen to point out any inconsistencies, even in a work of fiction, so accuracy is paramount.

We thought the characters were all very individual – who can forget the one with a parrot on his shoulder or the dishy Adam (Now who would play him in a film of the book?) and wondered whether they were based on people she knew. However, they really were a figment of her imagination!

In these days of self-publishing it was eye-opening to learn of the hoops to be jumped through and new computer techniques to be mastered. With mainly young London based agents appearing reluctant to take on older, regional, self-published authors, getting a novel out there can be a soul destroying business. Our group was full of admiration for Ann's determination to see her project through. She has a second novel out – The Foundling, and a third is work-in-progress.

We all wish her every success and enjoyed meeting her; *In the Midst of Life*; is now in the Gwynedd Library system, so it will be interesting to see how it is received.

*Sylva Heyworth*

## Group Co-Ordinators Report

All the groups are running well. I seem to be absent at more Table Tennis than being there. So thank you to those who hold the fort.

Many groups are gaining new members and I hope that they are enjoying the experiences.

The Book Group had an author visit. Ann Otway had travelled from Cheshire to elaborate on her book *In the Midst of Life*. We were all very apprehensive but we had a record number of members and a very pleasant afternoon. The author too, learnt a few things and gained valuable knowledge and insight from the readers perspective.

Come along and try a new skill. All details are in the diary.

I am always ready to source new groups. Let me know what your interest is and I will investigate possibilities.

*Geraldine Vincent*

## Monthly Meetings

### May

The AGM was held at the monthly gathering held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> May.

Alan Vincent chaired the meeting and welcomed all present. After adoption of the minutes of the AGM on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015, the Treasurer drew the members' attention to the accounts and invited questions. Following this the Accounts were accepted by the meeting and Christina Cook thanked for her efforts.

Bronwen Dorling and Norma Stockford both stood down from the committee after a number of years of hard work and were thanked by the meeting.

As we had no new nominations Alan declared that he would stand again as Chairman and nominations for all the Committee posts were sought. There were none and standing members of the committee, expressing their willingness to continue in their posts, were duly accepted for 2016.

After the formal business was concluded, instead of the usual speaker, the remainder of the meeting provided a good opportunity for social interaction with other members whilst enjoying a cup of tea and a biscuit.

### June

Paul and Pauline Aslin from Trees and Bees were our guest speakers in June. They live and work at Erw Goed, a smallholding in the Snowdonia National Park, between Cadair Idris and the Mawddach Estuary.

They have over 30 colonies of honeybees at several sites along the Mawddach Estuary and they use the beeswax to make skin creams, candles, soap and polish, which they sell alongside their honey.

Paul and Pauline brought along a glass-sided observation hive so we were able to see the queen and the other occupants of the hive, and understand exactly how a hive works and what bees do.

We were told all about the queen bee, male drones, whose sole task is to inseminate the queen, and then sterile female worker bees that build cells, feed larvae, collect nectar - basically do everything else!

Worker bees fly to flowers and extract nectar, carry it back to the hive, then spit it

into the mouth of another bee, which spits it into the comb. Other bees flap their wings to dehydrate the honey. When the water content is low enough, the bees cover each cell with a wax cap. Amazingly, a honey bee performs a carefully choreographed "*waggle*" *dance* that instructs the rest of the hive where to find a food source.

The talk was extremely informative, very interesting and we were fortunate to be able to purchase some of the beeswax products but unfortunately there was no honey.

Next time you are spreading honey on your toast remember this fact. It would take 1,100 bees to make 1kg of honey and they would have to visit 4 million flowers.

## July

At this meeting we welcomed Aled Evans of Age Cymru. He talked about the work of Age Cymru explaining who they were and what they provided:

*Age Cymru is the leading charity for all older people in Wales. We campaign, we research and we fundraise to make sure we build a better life for all older people. We ensure older people's voices are heard, we challenge and change attitudes, we fight discrimination wherever we find it and we tackle elder abuse in all its forms.*

*Age Cymru:*

- *We provide confidential, impartial, simple information and advice for free (Services section)*
- *We help people to claim their entitlements*
- *We celebrate creativity in later life*
- *We make physical activity available*
- *We work to make residential care a positive experience*
- *We promote healthy living throughout the year*

Aled provided brochures and leaflets on their services and answered the many questions from the audience.

An interesting session which gave the audience much food for thought.

### **That question you have always wanted to ask.**

Alan Vincent has volunteered to host a session on computer related topics.

The reply 'Hit any Key' is not the reply!!

If enough people are interested in a session on computer management, common problems and solutions, then this would be arranged.

This will not be a structured course but more a question and answer type session, to see if as a group we can each progress in the use of technology.

If you are interested please ring me on 01341 247 415

*Geraldine Vincent*

# North Wales Association of U3As Theme Day

(Organised by Abergele & District U3A)

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2016

at Canolfan Dewi Sant Centre, Pensarn, Abergele, LL22 7RG

## The Maritime Heritage of North Wales

Delegates arrive from 9.45 am for registration and refreshment

### Programme

10.30 – 10.45

Welcome & Housekeeping Announcements followed by Opening Remarks

Gillian Causer, Chairperson North Wales U3A Network

10.45 – 11.45

Deanna Groom, Maritime Officer RCAHMW

An Overview of the Maritime Heritage of North Wales

11.45 – 12.45

James Gareth Davies, University of Durham

The Menai Straits Logboat

(and an introduction to the Llyn Maritime Museum, Nefyn — if time)

12.45 – 14.15

LUNCH

14.15 – 15.15

Dr John Jones-Morris

A Short History of Porthmadog between 1820 and 1914

15.15 – 16.15

Peter Day

The Wreck of the Royal Charter in October 1859

16.15 – 16.30

Howard Mence, Llandudno Chairman

Words of Thanks

followed by Closing Remarks

Gillian Causer, Chairperson North Wales U3A Network

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If you are interested in attending this event please give your name to Alan Vincent  
(01341 247415) by **20th August**.

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



# Lunch Group

In June the Lunch Group tried out the **Nineteen57** restaurant on the Islawrffordd caravan site at Talybont.



## The Third Age Trust Conference 2016 East Midlands Conference Centre 23—25 August

Book on-line at [u3a-conference.eventbrite.co.uk](http://u3a-conference.eventbrite.co.uk)

*1000 U3As – what next?*

# CONFERENCE 2016

### Programme

#### TUESDAY

- 15.00 Registration opens
- 17.00 "Where Now?"
- 19.00 Dinner
- 20.30 Entertainment

#### WEDNESDAY

- 07.30 Breakfast
- 08.30 Registration opens
- 09.15 Chairman's welcome
- 09.30 Presentation 1
- 11.00 Coffee
- 11.30 Nick Hawes
- 12.45 Lunch
- 14.15 Presentation 2
- 15.45 Tea
- 16.15 Drop-in sessions
- 19.15 Drinks reception
- 20.00 Conference dinner

#### THURSDAY

- 07.30 Breakfast
- 08.30 Registration opens
- 09.15 Dr Victoria Williamson
- 10.30 Coffee
- 11.00 Presentation of candidates (if necessary)
- 11.15 AGM
- 13.00 Lunch
- 14.15 AGM continues
- 15.15 "The Future"
- 16.15 Conference closes

### Presentations

- Managing Your U3A** – trusteeship, effective committees, constitutions.
- Getting Your Message Across** – communications within your U3A.
- Managing Growth** – primarily focusing on U3As experiencing rapid growth.
- Maintaining A Vibrant U3A** – encouraging new members, volunteers, interest groups.
- How To Make The Best Use Of Open Online Courses (MOOCs)** – for U3A interest groups.
- Getting involved in U3A Research** – some ideas to get you going.
- Telling Your Life Stories** – writing and recording your memories and making memory boxes.
- Self-Publishing** – For U3As, U3A writing groups and members.
- Give And Take A Hand - U3A+** – supporting members facing age-related issues.

### Drop-in sessions

An opportunity to say hello, put faces to names and ask that all-important question to: Officers, Sub-committee Chairmen, Regional Trustees, National Office Staff, Third Age Matters Editor, Sources Editor.

### Speakers



#### NICK HAWES – "1 FOR ONE WELCOME OUR NEW ROBOT OVERLORDS"

Nick Hawes is a Reader in Autonomous Intelligent Robotics in the School of Computer Science at the University of Birmingham. His research is in the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques to create intelligent, autonomous robots that can work with or for humans. He is a passionate believer in public engagement with AI and robotics and was selected to give the Lord Kelvin Award Lecture at the 2013 British Science Festival.



#### DR VICTORIA WILLIAMSON – "MORE THAN A FEELING? MUSIC FOR EXTRAORDINARY WELLBEING CHALLENGES"

Dr Victoria Williamson is an authority on the psychology of music; how music is processed by the brain and the ways in which music impacts on our minds and behaviours. She is a Vice Chancellor's Fellow researcher and lecturer in Music at the University of Sheffield (UK) and author of 'You Are The Music' (Icon Books).

## Walking Group

The Walking Group continue to stretch themselves with walks to Llynau Cregannan Lakes in **May**, the top of Cadair Idris in **June** and along the Arduwy Way in **July**.



## Interested In Starting a Creative Writing Group?

If we have any member(s) who might like to start a Creative Writing Group for Barmouth U3A, we are invited to send one or two people to a day of workshops on Thursday 27th October 2016 at New Brighton Community Centre, Nr. Mold CH7 6QX.

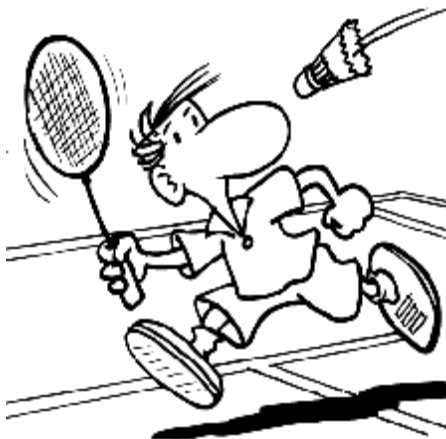
Presented by Marcia Humphries, the U3A National Adviser for Creative Writing, and by Jo Brooks, Convenor of a successful group in South Wales, the day will cover the basics of creative writing by working through the elements of a short story. It will serve as a refresher course for some and as a starter for others.

The sessions will be in the form of talks, with some fun written exercises. They will cover prose, not poetry & not basic grammar. The aim is to give people confidence to write.....no-one will be put on the spot. There will also be guidance available on how to set up a group or to boost membership of an existing group.

The cost will be subsidised by the Third Age Trust, so is just £8 per head, to include tea/coffee on arrival and lunch. Timing is 10am to 3.30pm.

Bookings are already being taken, so if you are interested give Geraldine Vincent (Group Co-ordinator—01341 247415) a call.

## Short Net Tennis / Badminton



We are still enjoying our sport and exercise. We have good games and good laughs. I just wanted to thank our members for continuing to show up on Mondays and Fridays, thereby enabling the clubs to keep going. I wish you all a happy and healthy summer (not sure how much sunshine we will be getting as the weather seems so unsettled this year). Look forward to seeing you in September when the playing commences once again. September 5<sup>th</sup> for Tennis. September 9<sup>th</sup> for Badminton.

*Wendy*

## Singing For Fun

I thought I would devise a quiz for you all this time. All the following questions are based on the songs we have sung in the past.

1. "The light is dimming and the dream is too"

Name the song and the show from which it comes.

2. "Once more you open the door and you're here in my heart" Name the song and the film it featured in.

3. " Lookin' back on how it was in years gone by" Name the song and the duo who sang it.

4. "Stars that used to twinkle in the skies are twinkling in my eyes" Name the song and the show from which it comes.

5. "Oh let us see another day, bless us this night I pray". Name the author of these words and the play from which they come.

6. "Wild geese that fly with the moon on their wings" Which singer popularised this song and name the show which it is from.

7. "The bright blessed day, the dark sacred night". Name the song and the musician who made it popular.

8. "They'll be happy to know that as you saw me go I was singing this song" Name the song and singer.

9. "But thinking young and growing older is one sin" Name song and singer.

10. "Up in the blue, blue mountains dewy pastures are sweet" Name the song and the lyricist.

*Answers at the next Monthly Meeting*

*Evelyn Richardson*

## Discussion Group

The Discussion Group have covered a wide variety of topics in their meetings since the start of the year.

Lively and enthusiastic chats about the Big Issues of the day have covered the following subjects:

**May**—What do we mean by Terrorism ;

**June**—Do Prisons Work? ;

**July**—'The changing role of women in Societies'.

Why not go along and have your say!! 4th Thursdays

The group are particularly keen to see more Ladies joining them.





# Italian Dreams

**Exclusive U3A Tour of Italy  
from top to bottom!**



**A 9-day tour of historic Italy from the ancient Greeks of Sicily to the mediaeval glories of Venice.**

## Interested in a Tour of Italy?

Members of the Prestatyn, Rhyl & District U3A have organised a proposed tour of Italy next year.

As they need to ensure sufficient numbers there is an invite, for any members of Barmouth U3A who would interested, to join them.

Priced at approximately £1740 per person the tour takes in the major historical sites of Italy, starting with the cities of Magna Graecia in Sicily, going on to the Roman period in Pompeii and Herculaneum, then the glories of Imperial Rome in the Eternal City itself, and finally coming to the decline and fall of the Roman empire when the Goths rule Italy from Ravenna.

Accommodation in 4\* hotels on half-board basis. All travel expenses, including tips for hotel, driver and guide included.

(Excluded: personal items, such as drinks and portering. Mid-day meals are not included. )

Dates: April 2nd to 11th 2017.

More information from Alan Vincent  
01341 247415.

## Barmouth U3A, Officers 2016/17

### Chairman

Alan Vincent: 01341 247415

[chairman@barmouthu3a.org.uk](mailto:chairman@barmouthu3a.org.uk)

### Vice Chairman

### Treasurer

Christina Cook: 01341 280374

### Secretary

Jacqui Puddle: 01341 280602

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