

CARDIFF



Dysgu, Chwerthin, Byw



Learn, Laugh, Live

MAGAZINE



Photo: Jim Bartlett

March 2024



Welcome

May I thank everyone who contributed to this edition of the Magazine. I hope that all members and potential members enjoy reading it. Without their commitment there would of course be no Magazine!

Thanks go to your committee who carry out the day to day running of Cardiff u3a . Last October a new venture an 'Open Day' was organised to run alongside the well establishes 'Meet the Groups' . As a result we attracted well over a hundred new members which also resulted in a nearly bursting at the seams 'New Members Coffee Morning'. We hope to continue with the dual event and see our numbers rise even further.

If you have an idea for bringing us to the attention of potential members please let us know; we now have two dedicated committee posts who have this as their remit and will be very keen to follow them through.

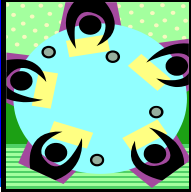
As has been the norm for the past two Editions, this copy of the Magazine is reaching you via your email as a PDF. This of course cuts down on the cost as we are now only printing sufficient copies for non-email members and to hand out to potential new members. Being a PDF also means that for those who want, can adjust the size of the pages of the on-screen Magazine on your devices to best suit your personal preferences.

Should you have any comments or suggestions for the next edition of the Magazine please contact me via the email address magazine@cardiffu3a.org.uk

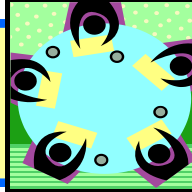
Please keep an eye on the Cardiff u3a website for up to date information about all aspects of your u3a.

Mario Greening Magazine Editor





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INTEREST GROUPS - THE HEART OF CARDIFF u3a

One of the main benefits of joining the u3a is the opportunity to participate in our special Interest Groups which bring together members with similar interests or those looking to get into something different. We have a wide variety of interest groups running very successfully – you can find out more about each one at -

<https://cardiffu3a.org/groups/>

A group isn't a course of study, it is a group of members learning from each other and they themselves are in control of what goes on. Sometimes there may be an external speaker or, more rarely, an expert tutor but the principle stays the same: we learn from each other.

WHEN?

Each group meets, on average, once or twice a month, usually in central Cardiff but occasionally in fellow members' homes.

WHO?

As the compère of the 'Good Old Days' would say:

Mainly Yourselfes.

Groups do not have to include an expert on the chosen subject, as all members learn from each other, or join together to research their interests. Whilst a member has to be nominated as a convenor or facilitator for each group, they are only as an administrator, that person does not have to be any more experienced in the subject of interest than the rest of the group.

Open Meetings?

Simply a meeting which is **open** to all members of Cardiff u3a and which you do not have to 'join' - you are automatically a member!. An invitation to come along to each meeting is sent via email, to ALL Cardiff u3a members.

The meetings are held on the second Tuesday afternoon of most months unless circumstances dictate otherwise, at City URC church, Windsor Place.

There are a wonderful variety of talks and presentations which cater for all interests. Many presentations are illustrated with slides and sometimes music. Often, presentations are by u3a Members drawn from Cardiff and across south Wales. If you feel that you have a presentation which you would like to give, please contact me via the email address below.

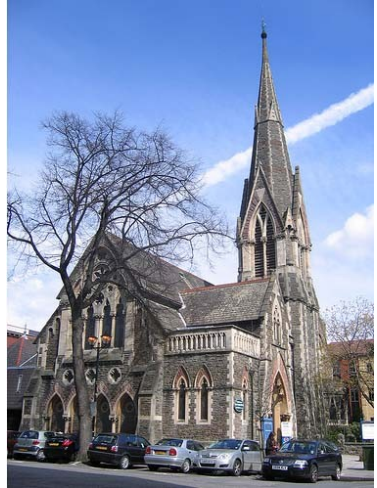


Photo credit: Mario Greening

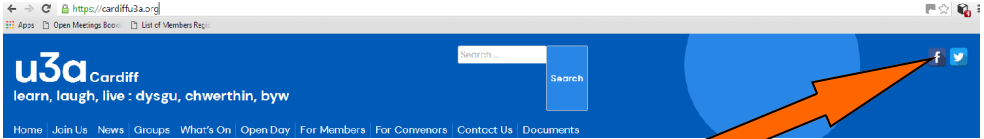
At the end of each meeting there is ample time for questions and then refreshments follow. Recent presentations have included Cyber Scams and how to Avoid them, Aberfan - the people's Tale, Wales and the Romans, Mr Rolls and Mr Royce. Presentations in the pipeline include Captain Scott and the Cardiff Connection, The Heritage of Blaenavon, Love and Betrayal behind Enemy Lines, Behind Tredegar House's Green Baize and Ye Olde Cardiff Towne!

I am always open to suggestions for topics, the names of speakers and indeed contributions from our own Cardiff u3a members.

Contact the Open Meeting and Speaker Organiser, Mario Greening at

Talks@cardiffu3a.org.uk

Look for the top right- hand side of the Cardiff u3a Home Page



Facebook



Social Media can be a bit like Marmite - you either love it or you don't. When used nicely it can have many uses. It can be informative and help spread the news

The easiest way to find the Cardiff u3a page is by going to the top right of our homepage and clicking on the Facebook icon.

We encourage you to give us a 'Like' and a 'Follow'. You may become aware of a new Interest Group you may like to join.

We are often asked about the best way to advertise Cardiff u3a and bring in new members. There's no doubting that word-of-mouth is probably the surest method of achieving that but social media can help spread the word. It's fairly effortless and you never know where it may lead.

Thanks for your consideration,

Ted.



Ted Richards has been tasked to look after Social Media for our Cardiff u3a website.



The Production of the Open Day/Meet The Groups Rolling Display Presentation

As told by Andrew Rees

In July of last Year the Chairman Mario Greening, asked me if it was possible to make a video of the activities of the Cardiff U3A, for use at the Open Day/Meet the Groups in October 2023. On first thoughts this was deemed possible but would take too long to produce in the time frame available. On discussion it was decided that a slideshow would be just as effective.

After some research and discussion with Mario various elements were decided. These were: images of the activities of the groups, details of where and when they meet and animation of each group's page. I initially started to make a proposal Video using a piece of Software called "Videopad" using resources already on hand. This enabled ideas to be tried out which would eventually be turned into still photographs.



Meanwhile I was contacting various groups with the assistance of Mario to arrange Photo Shoots to move the project forward and provide material for the presentation. It was decided that it would be a good idea if the presentation could be looped continuously using the AV resources of City church; the monitors in both entrances, in the Upper

Room, Meeting Room 1 and the two drop down screens and televisions in the Sacristy. Each of these would display the same finished presentation which would pro-





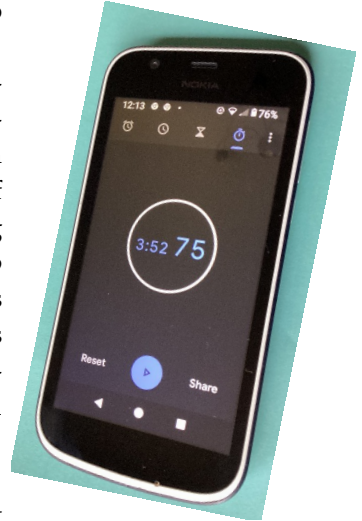
vide, we hoped an attractive rolling display for potential and present members to be informed of the Activity Groups Cardiff u3a had on offer.

After some research I decided that it would be best done in “PowerPoint” to enable the Looping and Animation to be easily kept to the running time of five minutes.

Throughout the months of August and early September Photo Shoots were undertaken with the assistance of members of the Photographic Groups who are also members of some of the groups that were too be featured in the presentation. I had now made decisions on the layout of the slides and what typeface to use in order that

the presentation matched National u3a Logo Guidelines.

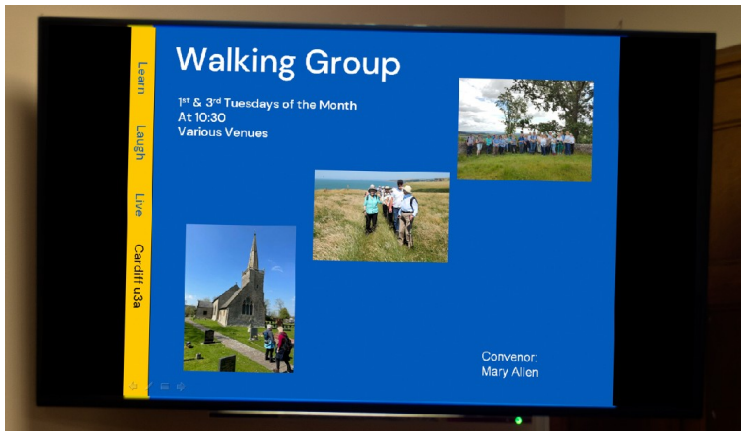
Late in August I was now working on the animations of the Images and Text, the Layout was almost finalised with each slide having a maximum of three Images one of which was to be a Picture of the exterior of the Meeting Venue, the remaining two be of the group activities as well as the group detail text. Where I was not able to get Images taken for the groups I used either suitable images from the Web Site or graphics to represent the subject, for groups that are desk or discussion based Web Images are used to represent the subject.



Early September and all the Images and content are virtually complete but I am struggling with getting the Timings and Looping to work. I had set myself a deadline of Mid September to have it finalised, just in case there were any problems, last minute alterations or corrections,. By the beginning of October the Slideshow was complete and only needed to be put on memory sticks ready to be used on the Open Day/Meet The Groups which took place as many of you will remember on the 10th of October 2023

I would like to thank all Convenors and members as well as staff from City URC for their help and patience with the making and displaying of the Slideshow.

Andrew Rees



Screen-shots of some of the Rolling display of Interest groups

Photos: Andrew Rees/Mario Greening



In addition to the work done by convenors, much of the organisation and information behind the successful running of Cardiff u3a is dependent on your data being held in **Beacon** so that convenors can easily and securely contact their groups and on the website where

there is a wealth of information about groups and what is planned.

Much of the organisation and establishment of Beacon was carried out by **Owen Parry** and **Alison Firth** and the website by Owen also. Both Alison and Owen have moved on from these roles and deserve a vote of thanks for all they have done.

A new team has moved in to continue to keep you fully informed and help where help is needed.

Is your data safe?

- Security is the first responsibility
- Your data is backed up professionally every day.
- Every U3A's data is encrypted



Beacon administration

Paul Perera is our Beacon Administrator, keeping us updated on system changes such as the new Membership login which came into place last spring. Some of the other ways Paul helps include supporting the setting up of new groups, troubleshooting emails that do not get through to members and supporting the membership renewal process.

beacon@cardiffu3a.org.uk



Website Management

David Harrison has taken over the role of website manager and so is managing a key outward face of Cardiff u3a. David is helping keep members and prospective members informed of what is going on and is supporting convenors and website editors to keep the website timely, interesting and user friendly.

website@cardiffu3a.org.uk

Website Editors

Martin Benton, Margaret Richards and many convenors are working to keep Group pages up to date and informative.

Martin: tabletopgames@cardiffu3a.org.uk

Margaret: groups@cardiffu3a.org.uk

News Editor

Susan Russell is our News Editor. We have two 'News' areas on the website.

News that is u3a related is flagged up on the Home (Welcome) page of the website.

News that may be of interest but is not u3a related appears in Non-u3a Items of Interest. A link can be found on the For Members page of the website.

news@cardiffu3a.org.uk

Facebook

Cardiff u3a has a Facebook page and a selection of u3a meetings are advertised by **Ted Richards** on a regular basis.

Interested in helping or supporting Cardiff u3a IT?

If you have an interest in supporting one or all of these roles your help would be greatly appreciated. Please contact groups@cardiffu3a.org.uk for more information.

Margaret Richards



Photographs by Andrew Rees as part of his preparation for the Open Day/Meet the Groups rolling display



Painting
for
Pleasure



Dungeons and Dragons



Gardening





Singing for Pleasure



Film Group



Table-Top Games



Writers Enjoying Words



Digital matters



Liz Thackray
Chair, Board of Directors

The u3a national body – the Third Age Trust - looks after all the u3as in the UK, providing educational and administrative support.

The Trust is overseen by a [Board of Directors](#), to which any u3a member may be elected by becoming a Regional Trustee.



Karen Green
Wales Trustee

As part of a 'get to meet you' initiative, the Chair of the Board of Directors, Liz Thackray and Wales regional Trustee, Karen Green over the course of a week, visited our South Wales Network area.

Individual u3as were asked to invite them to come and visit their branches and see them 'at work'. An invitation was duly issued by Cardiff u3a Chair Mario Greening who then approached groups meeting on the morning of the 29th October - our allocated date which turned out to be their first stop! Three Groups were visited by Liz and Karen; Bridge, Current Affairs Discussion and the Wordsmiths groups. With a short walk between each three meeting venues - a logistical problem arose as Liz was



Arriving at City Church
Photo: Andrew Rees



Bridge group
Photo: Andrew Rees

unable, due to health reasons to walk very far - of which we were not given any prior knowledge!

The meeting venues were City Church, the Quaker Meeting House and the Monmouthshire Building Society!

Both ladies managed to visit all three venues and where possible joining - in the activities, even taking part in two debates in the Current Affairs group: who were all on their best behaviour!

Afterwards they left us, well satisfied and complimentary about Cardiff u3a, to visit their next u3a, Porthcawl.

Wordsmiths
Photo: Andrew Rees



Current Affairs
Photos: Andrew Rees



Mario Greening



(some) Christmas 2023 celebrations

Our Cardiff u3a CYCLING GROUP celebrated their Christmas meet up on the 15th of December with a gentle ride from Pettigrews Tea Rooms in Bute Park down along the Taff Trail and ending up at the Mount Stuart Pub in Cardiff Bay. We all had a pint of beer or fruit juice said Rob Morris and a really good conversation too. Left to Right ... Rob / Joy / Sean / Stuart / David. I know what you are thinking but the guy in the middle is not Santa Claus, but he may make a good Henry 8th !

Rob Morris



BUS PASS THURSDAY

also celebrated another splendid year with lunch attended by many members on the 15th of December. Date sound familiar? Yes, the same date as the Cycling Group, and where were we? At Signor Valentino and if you look closely at the cycle group photograph you can see our venue!



Photo credit: Alison Tansom

U3a CIRCLE DANCE GROUP - Christmas/Solstice meeting



We are holding battery candles in our hands having finished with a Christmas candle dance at the Tabernacl (sic) which is on the Hayes in town. We went to lunch at Waterloo Tea Gardens, it was nice but it wasn't very Christ-massy. Pat Adams



Mary Allen sent in this photo of the WALKING GROUP who celebrated at the Three Arches in December. I wonder if the sign over their heads is a group description?

Xmas lunch at the old post house St Fagans. **FRIDAY COFFEE** and short walk group held a Christmas celebratory lunch in the village of St Fagans.

Marion Poyner



Just a few of the **SINGING FOR PLEASURE** members who had a little party at their last meeting before Christmas at City URC.

Photo credit: Alison Tansom

On the 24th of February 2023 I received an email from one of Cardiff u3as past Chairs, Mary Allen. I had however filed it away until now. In her email she recounts arranging the planting by Rhodri Morgan of a commemorative tree to celebrate 25 years of Cardiff u3a (founded in 1987). As you can see it was a wet February so what's new? The photographs are actually photographs of the original by member Rod Cooke.



On the 3rd of March 2024 I went to Alexandra Gardens (also known as the Peace Garden) and took a photograph

of the same tree. It has grown a little in the past 12 years but still remains recognisable; but I was a little early for the blossom as the buds were just in their formative stage of the year. Along with the tree was a commemorative plaque recording the reason for the tree's existence but unfortunately for posterities purpose the plaque itself does not record the date





that the tree was planted. Cardiff had the name University of the Third Age rather than what we are now, the u3a.

So, here is the tree, you can just make out the **Welsh National War Memorial - Cofeb Ryfei Genedlaethol Cymru** in the background, a familiar sight to many of you of course.

A challenge for someone in one of the two photography groups to try and capture the tree in full blossom please!

All going well it could make the front cover of a future Magazine.

Mario Greening



**Photo credits:
MARILYN GUEST**



**Do you have experience of teaching a subject at any level?
Do you have knowledge or skills in an area that could be of interest to others?**

If you do and you are interested in sharing your knowledge or skills with other Cardiff u3a members, then please read on.

The Interest Groups model operated by Cardiff u3a serves members well, giving members the opportunity to meet regularly, get to know each other and learn together. Many Interest Groups can easily provide for themselves a constant supply of material. For example, new novels, walking routes, discussion topics, games, dances and songs., historical periods, visiting different places.

For people to make progress in learning some subjects, such as language, there often needs to be an element of teaching – if only so that the Convenor can guide/share information that will help the group in its learning. Interest Group members tend to stay with many of their groups over a period of years; sometimes into double figures!

Consider then a different type of course, a **Short Time, Limited Course Course**

If you are someone who would like to pass on your knowledge or skills to fellow u3a members would there be some appeal in sharing that knowledge or skill?

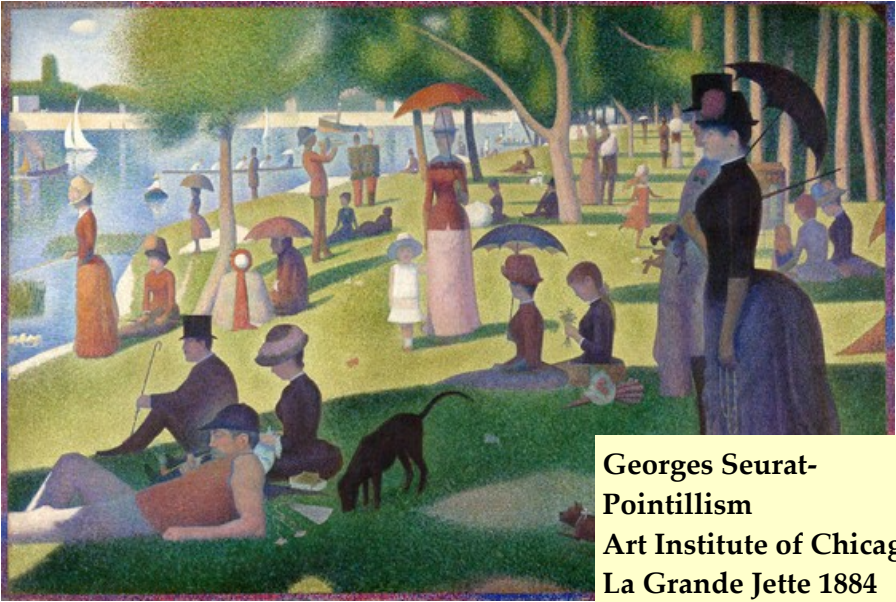
A **Short Course** can be as swift as an hour or two hour, or several sessions spread over a number of weeks or even months: such as producing a play. **But all will have a predefined length.**

Some examples; photographic techniques, studying a specific work of literature; fly-tying for fishing, how to use a particular piece of software; the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright or Norman Foster. Iron Age sites or Norman castles in south Wales. Art; the study of Leonardo da Vinci's The Last Supper or his Lady with an Ermine or indeed any other artist. Craft techniques, tufting, candle painting or an introduction to crochet. Glass painting. The possibilities are boundless.

You could even consider offering a short course on-line!

Interested? Contact the Chair of Cardiff u3a at chair@cardiffu3a.org.uk

Mario Greening



**Georges Seurat-
Pointillism
Art Institute of Chicago,
La Grande Jette 1884**

Much better informed people than me, have argued about what makes great, or even good art. What I have learned over the eighteen months of researching art and artists for our Art Appreciation group, is that we are all perfectly qualified to know what we respond to in a work of art. We don't have to like it but it helps to remember that the artists wanted to tell us, or to show us something, and it is up to us to imagine what that might be even if we are wrong.

The Impressionists wanted to paint light. They



**Juan Gris - Cubist
Harlequin with Guitar, 1919, [Musée National d'Art Moderne](#),**

also wanted to paint what they saw, at the moment, and have us see it and feel it too. Fauvists wanted us to see colour, cubists to see shapes, Pointillists took the latest scientific breakthroughs and showed us that the eye can see a

different colour when many different shades are dotted side by side.

Painters of industrial landscapes let us feel the heat of the furnace and anticipate the fatigue of the workers.

War artists hope we will be inspired to support the war effort, or alternatively, to fight to end all wars by their depiction of the devastation and horrors.

Does a bowl of oranges make your mouth water? Do you want to touch the texture of the skin of an apricot? What is clear, is that the ground-breaking names in the art world, wanted to do just that – break new ground. They saw things differently and insisted that we do the same.

As every new art movement breaks upon the word, some critics will condemn it as nonsense, madness or just a mess. Others can see that our way of looking at the world will never be the same again, that is, if we are really looking.



Nonn Vaughan

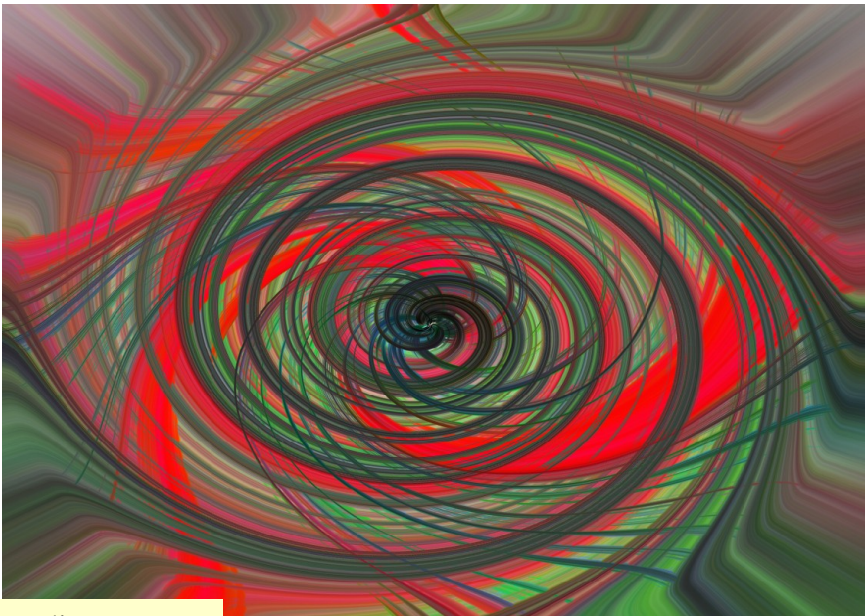


Photo credit:
YVONNE COURTINE



bpt@cardiffu3a.org.uk

Most Cardiff u3a members qualify for a bus pass and are therefore eligible to join Bus Pass Thursday. As you may guess, we use our passes to travel on local authority buses to many destinations in south Wales. We have a regular BPT trip once a month, as you guessed on a Thursday! There is no group meeting fee just the cost of your coffee and lunch. Sometimes however we need to pay for

entry to places such as the BBC Wales studios or Llancaich Fawr Manor. Each BPT starts in central Cardiff and we may use one or two buses to get to our destination. Once there we have coffee at a comfortable establishment before visiting an attraction such as the



castles in Chepstow, Raglan and Caerphilly. As an educational body we have free entry under the Educational Scheme to CADW sites. Recent BPT visits have included Pontypriidd, Hereford, St Fagans, the BBC studios as well as Llandaff Cathedral and Caerwent Roman remains too!



Future BPTuesday trips hope to include the Brecon Mountain Railway, Llancaich Fawr Vineyard,, Raglan Castle, Aberdare Big Pit and Caerleon.. There will also be the opportunity for BPT members to choose and help



You never know who you might meet on a BPTuesday trip!

organise other destinations.

Mario Greening

I'm pleased to say that the Cardiff u3a Circle Dance group is thriving, writes Pat Adams.

Now in its twelfth year, new members continue to join the group alongside some of the original members who first danced at the Masonic Hall in 2012. Our repertoire has

changed over the years but the core of favourite dances remains. This term we have two 'challenge' dances from Greece, consolidating old rhythms with new patterns of steps.



Some of you may have read an article in the Winter 2023 issue of Third Age Matters entitled *Let's Dance*. It celebrated dance as an age-old activity going back millennia, reminding us that "expressing ourselves in rhythmic movement is almost hardwired into us... it's good for us, and our minds and bodies know it!" We know it as much in our sixties and seventies, and beyond, as we did in our teens.

So it is hardly surprising to see that dance is popular among u3a groups across the country. I asked the u3a Trust's head office how many offered dance and, after a search of their Sitebuilder database records, I was sent a printout that showed 28 different types of dance (including some dance exercise groups under different names). They could only list u3a groups that use Sitebuilder, however, and many, such as Cardiff, do not. It is hard, therefore, to know which kind of dance heads the list nationwide, but the search result suggests the most popular are English and Scottish Country Dancing (26 groups) and International Folk Dance (24), with Circle Dance next

(23). I can add another 13 u3a groups that are listed in the circle dance network Directory for 2024, so that's at least 36 groups. Similar directories for other dance styles may reveal more groups for other forms of dancing, yet, I would suggest, circle dance and u3a are a perfect match. You don't need a partner, the circle opens to accept you, allows you to dance at your own energy level, and introduces you to the music and rhythms of many cultures.

Our group is very loyal, welcoming, and open to new music and new dances. We never stop learning. If you can walk, you can dance.

Pat Adams, Cardiff u3a

<https://cardiffu3a.org/groups/circle-dance/>



Photo credit:
Marilyn Guest

The group has continued to flourish under it's new name. The new title more correctly reflecting the focus on things digital, rather than those just connected to computing. The last 12 months have seen us have presentations on

- Editing Google Photos using Snapseed;
- Our first look at ChatGPT and the emerging excitement over a form of Artificial Intelligence;
- a look at how Apple Photos and Google Photos, can and won't work together and how to get round the problems they create for us;
- a session on Our Favourite Apps; and
- another one on how to Create a Digital Magazine;

(a pity I missed that one ed)

- as well as the annual Keeping yourself IT safe online.
- We also looked at Smart TVs; and remembered to do some
- Autumn cleaning of our computers - the digital equivalent to spring cleaning.
- We looked at Digital sound - the hardware and software involved;
- and had an update on How Artificial Intelligence has evolved over the 10 months since we first looked at it;
- and again an annual session - Explaining how the Internet works.

We also produced a few articles for the Cardiff u3a website on Artificial Intelligence; Scams; and PC maintenance. An unexpected involvement into the world of debating brought success for two group members, but a determination from both that the stress was just too great to attempt such an event again!



grazing” <https://thoughtgrazing.org> and the Forums on the site to which all u3a members are welcome to subscribe.

With 40 members and regular attendance of c.20, we find the time to learn and laugh and share with each other our digital experiences.

David Harrison digital@cardiffu3a.org.uk



 **THE LIGHTROOM PANTRY**

This strangely titled group takes its name from The Pantry in Charles Street (part of Cornerstone) where we met initially. A small group of enthusiasts who like to process images using Adobe software chat, swap hints and tips, watch tutorial videos and learn new techniques to enhance their digital images.

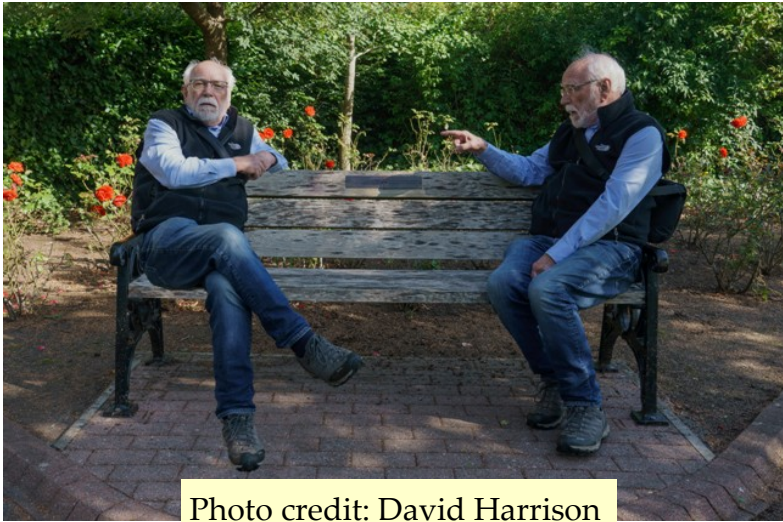
A few of the images in this magazine will have been submitted by members of the group. Our objective is to enhance the images we’ve taken with our cameras, not to radically change them. So therefore techniques such as cropping the image to its best dimensions; removing spots, streaks, blurs and other unwanted objects; changing the saturation of the colours; removing noise and sharpening images are the sort of thing we look at and through practice hope to improve our images.



Occasionally a trick will be demonstrated such as blurring the water in a waterfall, or stacking one image on top of another as shown below -



Photo credit: Andrew Rees



*I often wondered how David could be in two places at the same time!
(ed)*

Photo credit: David Harrison

Photo:
Jonathan Guest



The Recorder Group's Year

We have remained a happily collaborative and democratic group, with all members encouraged to make suggestions for repertoire and to lead the group in our playing sessions. We have this year grown as a group in all sorts of ways: we gained a couple of new members, but we also made some significant strides in the ambition of our repertoire and, most satisfyingly, in the quality of our ensemble music-making.

A major advance in the quality of our musicality came with our work in the first half of 2023 on a three-movement suite arranged for us called *Sea Sketches*, by far

the most complex, sustained, varied and demanding piece of music we had ever attempted. The arrangement for recorders was by American composer and tuba player, Chaz Warren, one of our Phil Edwards' musical contacts. As you may know, we perform under the name *The Old Grey Whistleblowers*, hence the dedication under the title.

Our work on this piece was developed and enhanced by the input of Cardiff-based teacher James Brookmyre, a professional recorder player of international reputation, who led us in a session on *Sea Sketches*. This brought our skills to a new level, and gave us the confidence to try out more ambitious pieces than we were previously accustomed to play. We've now added a piece by JS Bach to

our repertoire, and plan to work on an arrangement of Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus*. We ended the year with a run of concerts, all of which were very well received. Members of the u3a who attended the AGM in November 2023 will have enjoyed our performance of early music, featuring Phil on button melodeon, with a world premier reading of a Shakespearean sonnet specially composed by Martin Gordon for the occasion (read his account of it deeper into the Magazine Ed.)

We also played two Christmas concerts, one for the Llandaff 50+ Group, a new experience for us, and for them, which was enthusiastically appreciated. We included some factual information amongst the music – Rosemary Griffiths, who led us in these Christmas concerts, was keen to introduce the u3a, both the organisation generally and our group members in particular, highlighting our varied backgrounds, as well as pursuing her mission to establish the reputation of



the recorder as a serious instrument, especially in view of its recent (and, of course, wholly unjustified) negative publicity. And Martin focused on the greatness and popularity of the recorder both historically and up to the present day with a talk which was especially well-received, full of fascinating information new to the audience (and, as it transpired, to the group!). As further evidence of our success, we were promptly invited back to give a St David's Day concert for them in 2024.

Here's a video clip of this Christmas concert:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dftUzpZ7MSA>

Our other Christmas concert was at Ty Enfys Residential Care Home where we have played regularly for many years, and now play in commemoration of one of the group's founder-members, the late and much missed **Stella Lightman**,

who also used to play the piano weekly for the residents, and who, a couple of years ago, became a resident herself.

We look forward eagerly to another year of collaborative music making and to adding new projects to our growing list of accomplishments.

MARTIN GORDON



SLOW TRAIN COMING

Slow Train Coming – it may need a bit of an explanation. We go somewhere different on the First Thursday of each month by train, have a walk and learn something about our destination and the people who come from there.

We started a year ago and adhered to the u3a motto of Learn, Laugh, Live. It's been a year of train strikes, line closures and storms but we only had to cancel one outing when Storm Ciarán was due to hit. With train strikes



threatening disruption we've tended to stay fairly local so far, going to places such as Rhymney, Llantwit Major, Penarth, Ystrad Mynach and Caerphilly. The furthest we've probably been is Abergavenny.

Sometimes we've been lucky to have a local expert tell us about a place such as when we visited Aberdare, Taff's Well and **Llanhilleth** but usually it's my own research. Keep your wits about you though as I sometimes throw some untruths into the commentary.



Our walks can vary in length but when there is a long walk planned there are usually opportunities for people to choose a shorter option. The whole ethos of the group is relaxed. There

is no need to book. You can just turn up on the day, buy your own train ticket and meet us on the platform. The same goes for lunch, either bring your own sandwiches or find somewhere local to eat.



Visit to Cheltenham



Please feel free to join us and if you want a flavour of our trips then there is a record on our Slow Train Coming web page.

Ted Richards

<https://cardiffu3a.org/groups/slow-train-coming/>





The two photography groups combined to stage a Photography Exhibition at Hearth Gallery, Llandough Hospital, by courtesy of Cardiff and Vale University Hospital Trust; it took place in September / October 2023. Entry was free to the public. The Cardiff u3a has two photography groups both of which meet fortnightly, on alternate Wednesdays. One is a long established group. The other was set up a few months before Covid as an overflow group. **This latter group has some vacancies and would welcome new members regardless of their photography experience.** So if you are interested in photography why not give them a try. The idea of an exhibition was first

mooted 3 years ago but had to be kept on hold due to Covid restriction. Then early in 2023 an opportunity arose to

As one exhibitor remarked, you are never alone with camera at your side.

hold it at the Hearth Gallery which is located within Llandough Hospital. We decided not to set a theme because we wanted the exhibitors to submit images that not only had meaning for them but also reflected something of themselves. Members of each group were invited to send in three images each for possible selection, two of which would be chosen by a selection panel for display. This proved to be very beneficial as it helped ensure there were no duplicates, and the exhibition as a whole was balanced. Eventually almost 60 images were submitted for consideration, from which we choose 40. Some of these were taken on workshops organised by group leaders, and some in response to past set themes. Several were taken spontaneously by group members, many as an antidote to past

Covid restrictions. As a result there were some really interesting experimental creative photographs on display - as well as more traditional landscapes (including some stunning sunsets), and several nature images and also a

good selection of holiday photographs and a few that convey important messages about cultural identity, inclusion and global warming. None of this would have been possible without the support of the Cardiff and Vale University Hospital Trust and Magda Lackowska, the Cardiff u3a Committee, and the photographers who so willingly shared their passion for photography for others to enjoy. We owe a great debt to them all and thank them for their unfailing support and encouragement. There are some great images on show and some wonderful examples of why photography is so beneficial for older people. As one exhibitor remarked, you are never alone with camera at your side.

MICHAEL BARNES

PHOTOGRAPHY FOR OLDER PEOPLE
 Exhibition by Cardiff u3a Combined Photography Groups.
 20th September - 23rd October 2023
 Open Daily 10am - 5pm
 University Hospital Landorgh, C194 2JG
 nationalgrid, Arts & Culture, ARTS & CULTURE, GIG, NHS

Editorial note: Michael is a former convenor of the Practical Photography ‘overflow’ group and took lead responsibility for organising this exhibition. He is an experienced photographer specialising in wildlife and nature photography.

In 2016 he was awarded

Associate Membership of the Welsh Photographic Federation.



Photo credit:
Linda Price

Started about 5 years ago this friendly group meets on the first and third Wednesday of the month - and has flourished thanks to convenor **Pauline Bezodis**.

Learning a new language can be daunting but members find that reading, translating and discussing short articles, sharing personal news and playing games like Taboo and Articulate in Italian, make learning and practicing Italian, fun.

We are helped by having so many Italian words that we already use, many in relation to food such as :

Al dente - literally meaning 'to the tooth' - the perfect consistency of cooked pasta, **Biscotti** – plural of biscotto meaning a biscuit or cookie, and from the Latin word *biscoctus*, meaning 'twice-cooked'. **Bruschetta** a light Italian dish of toasted bread topped with olive oil, garlic and chopped tomatoes, **Panini** · a toasted sandwich made with Italian bread, (this is the plural of *panino* in Italian), **Pasta** and **Pizza** we know very well and **Tiramisu** – which literally means 'pick me up' from the Italian *tirare* to pull, *mi* – me and *su* – up.

Other words are :

Bravo - we use this word in exactly the same way to mean good, well done, **Extravaganza** – in Italian meaning 'an extravagance', **Fresco** – which in Italian means 'cool' or 'fresh', **Fugitive** – from the verb *fugire* which means to escape and **Graffiti** – from the singular Italian *graffito*, which essentially means 'a scribbling'.

We can even see Italian words in the pasta aisle at the supermarket :

Conchiglie, which are shaped like shells, **Farfalle** which is bow-tie, or butterfly-shaped and **Orecchiette** having a shape which resembles a small ear.



Photo: Jane Grehan

Also very familiar are the different types of coffee served in Italy, which is very important to the Italians. If you simply order **un caffè**, you will get an **Espresso**. The Italians generally only drink **Cappuccino**

Photo: Jane Grehan



with breakfast, but tourists can usually order it at any time of the day. Beware of ordering a **Latte** as you will just get a glass of milk, order **Latte Macchiato** which means coffee stained milk!

We learn a lot by looking at how words are derived :

Affogato which literally means ‘drowned’ in Italian, and describes when a liquid is poured usually over cold food like ice cream, **Uovo affogato** means poached egg (Uovo), **Bucaneve** - (bucare - to pierce neve - snow) meaning snowdrops, **Cacciavite** meaning screwdriver from caccia (‘to drive in, to shove’) + vite (‘screw’). **Girasole** (sunflower) – which comes from girare to turn and sole – sun and we have **Parasole** which comes from the Latin ‘para-’, to shield or protect, and **Rompicapo** (rompere - to break and capo - head) meaning a brain teaser eg Wordle.

Direct translations can seem a bit odd for example the English word Honeymoon becomes **Luna di Miele** which literally means moon of honey!

Some Italian colloquial sayings can seem really strange for example **In bocca al lupo** means to wish a performer good luck before going on stage, our version of ‘break a leg’ but translates as ‘in the mouth of the wolf’.

Beware of false friends though that can catch us out for example : **Camera** which means room not a camera, **Educato** which means polite, well raised and not educated, **Fattoria** which means farm, not factory and **Libreria** where you can only buy and not borrow a book as it means bookshop not library.

And finally we all know the Italian greeting and parting words :

Buongiorno – good morning, **Ciao** – an informal way of saying hello and good-bye and **Arrivederci** – until we see each other again.

Grazie mille

Jane Grehan

Italian@cardiffu3a.org.uk

Visit to Sedgemoor Battlefield

During 2023, the History Group held regular meetings twice a month (except August). Topics during the year were varied, ranging from Aneurin Bevan, Normandy Landings during World War II, to the Life of Henrietta Lacks, from the Russian Revolution to Celtic People in the Iron Age. In December, members of the Group discussed their favourite historical person or event.

The highlight of the year was undoubtedly our field trip to Sedgemoor in Westonzoyland, the site of the Battle of Sedgemoor in 1685. From the original idea of U3A member Mike Bailey, and with considerable assistance from Margaret Richards, 19 of us travelled on two VEST buses to Westonzoyland.

The trip included:

- A visit to the Battle of Sedgemoor Visitor Centre in St Mary's Church, which uses graphic displays, touch screens and wall-mounted video screens to tell visitors the story of the Battle of Sedgemoor from its causes to its consequences;
- An introductory talk by a local guide, who proved to be extremely knowledgeable and explained the background to the battle;
- A walk to the Sedgemoor Battlefield site



Photos credit: Philip Stewart



led by the local guide, who pointed out to us the lines of battle and how it proceeded to its conclusion.

We learned that the Battle of Sedgemoor was the last and decisive engagement between England and rebels led by the

Duke of Monmouth during the Monmouth rebellion, fought on 6 July 1685. The Duke of Monmouth was Charles II's illegitimate son and attempted to seize the English throne from his uncle, the Catholic James II, who had succeeded to the throne on the death of his brother Charles II.



Photo credit:
Philip Stewart



Photo credit: Andrew Rees

The battle proved to be a massacre for Monmouth's mainly untrained troops.

After the battle, about 500 of Monmouth's troops were captured and imprisoned in St Mary's Parish Church in Westonzoyland, while others were hunted and shot in the ditches where they were hiding. More were hanged from gibbets erected along the roadside. **James II sent the infamous 'Hanging Judge' Jeffreys** to round up the Duke's supporters and tried them in the Bloody Assizes at Taunton. About 1,300 people were found guilty, many being transported abroad, while others were executed. The Duke of Monmouth himself was executed in the Tower of London.

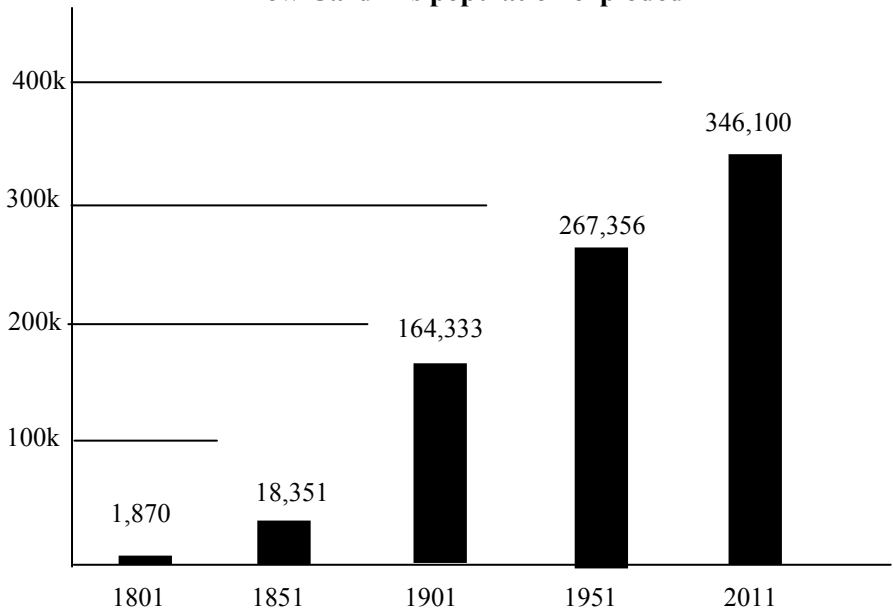
The History Group continues to hold regular meetings on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at URC Windsor Place, usually starting at 2:00 pm. For more information, please visit the Cardiff U3A website or contact Philip at

history@cardiffu3a.org.uk.



Ponder, if you can spare a minute, on the history of the city we call home. Now, it is true there are some that believe Cardiff's history & heritage have been plundered, pillaged, looted and just destroyed by the great bulldozer that goes by the name of progress. And it's easy to see how that opinion has arisen. But there are others who can see between the smart edifices of the newly developing city, the clues that show us the rich history that still lies therein. In the late Victorian era, Cardiff was the fastest growing city in Europe and possibly the World.

How Cardiff's population exploded



Therein lies an irony that in continuing to develop, diversify and grow, Cardiff is keeping to the heritage that spawned it. So, to that history! The Local History Group helps us learn about the development of the city and its peoples that's brought it to the current state we enjoy today. We try to help you see the clues to the history that otherwise you would just walk past day in, day out, without realising they're there. That the history is right beneath your feet and in front of your eyes, quite literally. That it's behind you (all year round, not just for the panto season) and above you. To help manage our understanding, we've been looking at it over the last year through different themes:

Cardiff Districts: We have looked at the original “Old Town” bordered by Working Street, Womanby Street, Castle & Duke Street. While the Roman presence is obvious to all under the castle, we discovered that the Vikings, too, has a big part to play



And there is still much to uncover in future meetings both in the Old Town and the suburbs that developed with explosive expansion at the end of the Victorian into the Edwardian era.

Iconic Cardiff: We have looked at parts of Cardiff that on their own have come to symbolise the city in one way or another. Bute Park, Cathays Cemetery, Cardiff Libraries & the David Morgan department store (the largest in Wales). And there are many more examples to investigate; the waterways, docks, buildings, streets to name but a few.

Influential Families: Who knew that the daughter of a Jamaican plantation (and slave) owner would become a leading light for the sight impaired and disadvantaged of Cardiff? Well, many of us didn't until the good folks at Sight life shared the history of the **Shand family and particularly Frances Batty**.

Similarly, our meetings at Insole Court and Tredegar House shed light on the role of these families in Cardiff's development. And yes, the Morgans of Tredegar House in Newport were very influential in Cardiff. As were the Mackintoshes we also learnt about. And we've only scratched the surface in our learning about the dynastic families that impacted Cardiff. Not to mention the simmering under-currents between them

Cardiff Characters: We were introduced to the Cardiff Giant and through his life learnt about Temperance Town – a Cardiff district near the station that few people know about. And there's light to be shed in the darker corners of Cardiff's history, looking at some of its more notorious criminals.

And if that's not enough for you, well we're also looking at the role of different ethnic groups the docks brought us in the history of the diversity of our multi-ethnic city. We started with the Irish who settled in Newtown (another district that's disappeared unless you know where to look) and there's so much more to learn about the diversity of our city and how it came about.

We try to tap any source of knowledge we can and welcome contributions from everyone as we've all got stories to tell. And we combine indoor talks with outdoor walk-and-talks – the complete mental and physical health package. But above all it's a lot of fun and chance to get together with like-minded folk. You can keep up with what we're doing through the u3a website and e-mail updates I send out to all on the group membership list. Not on-line? No worries, we can send out updates through the regular mail too.

So, if you're a long-standing group member localhistory@cardiffu3a.org.uk

or new to u3a and "fancy a nose" into what we're doing, doors open at 10.30 every third Friday morning of the month. Jackie and I look forward to seeing you.

Stuart Swinburne

Photo credit Andrew Rees





Photo credit: Yvonne Courtine



Photos credit:
Marilyn Guest



You know, it's surprising what you see when you look

Our two photography groups each meet twice a month. In the Morning Group we have one session to take photographs and a second one to view the results. And maybe the hardest job for the convenor and steering group is to choose the locations and topics for each month's projects. **When you've been meeting for over nine years (I make that around 110 months/ 220 meetings for the morning group alone) the task of finding something new each time can be a bit of a challenge.**

Which is why we found ourselves with three successive "shoots" in Cardiff City Centre over the winter months wondering, after tackling "Patterns" in November and a Christmas " Scavenger Hunt" in December, whether we'd overdone it and left nothing more to photograph for our " weird and wonderful " visit to Cardiff Market in January.

No chance! it was one of our best visits yet with

plenty of pics, and tales, to show and tell at our follow up meeting. The stall holders - especially the fishmongers - were amazingly accommodating of a dozen or so photographers descending on them. **And it really is surprising what you see when you take the trouble to look.**



Photo credit: Jim Bartlett

Who knew you could buy - a baggy penguin, some ear and eye wipes, a tool set and “ Indian Weapons” from just one stall, eat some fine food, wear a top hat, and have a sing song around the piano before going home time.

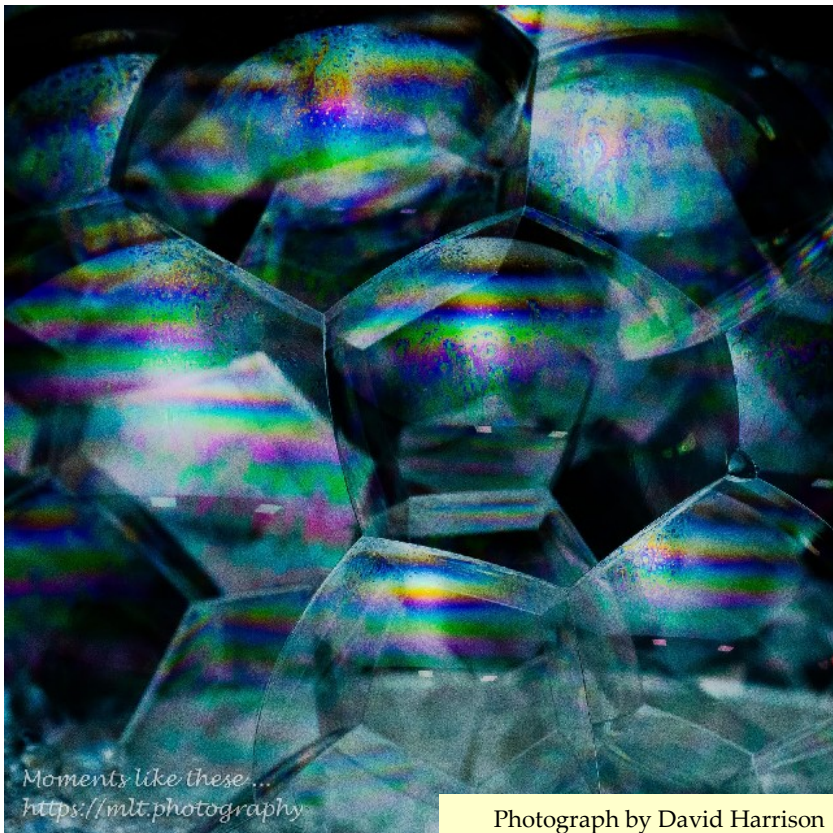
The afternoon “ Practical” group meets at URC, and on outdoor trips, with Andrew Rees leading, have some fascinating projects. Our “Bubbles” session proved to be a hoot with a group of “big kids” blowing bubbles at each other and some really great images produced from the more studious moments.

Jonathan Guest

Jonathan Guest, co-convenor, (with Jim Bartlett), Morning Group and Andrew Rees, convenor, Practical Photography Group.

photography@cardiffu3a.org.uk

Photography2@cardiffu3a.org.uk



Photograph by David Harrison

DELIVERIES

Brown cardboard packages tied up
with tape

Dropped by doors and fences and
gates;

Not always where they ought to be,
Such is the case with deliveries.

Brown paper wrapping used to imply
That something naughty was inside,
But now with instagramming fame
Nothing causes any shame.

Brown paper packages tied up with
string

Used to be a favourite thing
But oodles of online shopping later
The recycling mountain just gets
greater.

Way back when in memories
Just postmen did deliveries
Now there's Amazon, Hermes, Yodel,
Fedex

DPD, DHL, UPS and DX.
Vans and cars whizz up and down
In every village, city and town,
Bringing goods from near and far
From the World Wide Web bazaar.

But all the best deliveries
Don't come with couriers in liveries.
No postage paid, no bubble-wrap:
Just a newborn in your lap.

Noelle Bryant

Pigeon

Strutting round with peacock pride
The pigeon has no need to hide.
In the middle of the grass
He wanders round, the ruling class.

The smaller birds approach and
swerve,
Daunted by his daring nerve.
They view the garden from the trees
Then fly off on the gentle breeze.

Beneath the bush a crouched feline
Launches, catches, grabs the spine,
A frenzied, feathered spin and then,
The pigeon heaves aloft again.

Disgruntled now, the cat just sits,
Paws at its mouth and spits
Out down and fine grey plumes
And then the dawn patrol resumes.

You'd think the pigeon would be on
guard
For marauders in the yard
But no, the morrow, back it comes
Searching for discarded crumbs.

Nature red in tooth and claw,
Crimson pool upon the floor,
The bird that once escaped attack
Has now become a breakfast snack.

Noelle Bryant

THE POWER OF FOOD!!

Our Blodwen has found herself a new man

She'll keep him quite close if she can

Yet he's eyeing up her sister Gertie

Who's not nearly so flirty

But can cook quite a mean apple flan!

Irene Lock



Photo credit: **PAT ABRAHAMS**

Al Dente

She had me removed today.
It took a while - for by now
We were intimately bound
And I resisted all attempts
At separation.

And as she walked away, relieved,
Even triumphant,
A deep-felt sadness welled up in me.

A life-long companion,
Yanked out, surplus to requirements.
Rejected, tossed aside.
What gratitude!

Oh the times we'd had.

My thoughts turned to our times together,
From our first days long years ago.

I'd licked through Mr Whippy;
Munched on wicked Crunchies;
Chewed over algebra on school pencils (HB);
Swum through Aegean seas;
Squelched on marshmallows
Round campfires in Tennessee;
Tried to survive those Mars bars.

Crossing Europe in a 2CV;
Cycled Italian Alps till I hurt;
Wincing in icy winds on Swiss ski slopes;
Nibbled our solemn wedding cake.

Yes, I held out through thick and thin.

Until ...

I chomped down too hard
On that salad in Rome -
Yikes, ouch!
Yes, that was
The Day of The Stone.

She'd bitten with too much abandon,
Oblivious onto that stone.
It was then I cracked.

Oh, they fixed me.
Drilled me and filled me.
Filled me and drilled me.
But there came the day, in my dotage
I could no longer hold.
A tweak - oh how I tried to hold.
But in the end the stone had won.
And I could no longer serve.

Requiem al dente

Sue Biggins

Photo
Credit:
**Jonathan
Guest**



Dementia Rosary

No. I will not go to bed. I have to say
my prayers. You girl
Fetch me my white scarf
You just sit here in your nurse's uni-
form
And you won't do as I ask

Fetch me my white scarf
I need to cover my legs
I need to cover my head
I want to put my socks on
And she will not help.

I have got a small white dog
And he is very good
My small white beads are very good.
I need clean socks
And you will not allow me to have
them.

*Darting an elephant
And I with my eyes shut*

This is no way to treat a world-
famous actress

I need my hankies done safe
I need my hankies done safe
I need my hankies in a safe place
My hankies need to be in a safe place
I need my safe hankies in their place

*Hands together softly so
Little eyes shut tight*

I never had any children
Because I'm a Roman Catholic
And Catholics aren't allowed to
marry
I need you to do my hankies
Hand me my hankies

You can scratch away all you like
God you can scratch away
I am very sorry for these sins
Scratch scratch
Don't wave your feet at me

She's only a madam
But I should not be treated like this
So, could you please bring me my
white scarf
I shall need to put it on

I still used to do every season in Lon-
don
They couldn't get enough of my soft
Irish eyes

You are so ugly
I've never seen anyone as ugly as you.
I can see you waving your feet
Like a great insect
A preying mantis
I must finish my prayers.

Don't touch me
Just bring me my sapphire shawl

I must cover my head
Don't sit on my bed cover

Linda Slater

Member Robert Wilcox has sent in photographs of two of his paintings which were crafted at the Painting for Pleasure group.

The subject is, as perhaps some of you will recognise, Whitesands Bay, St Davids Pembrokeshire from the viewpoint of the coastal path.

The second painting was done on the basis, as Robert puts it: 'just painting again fairly similar'.



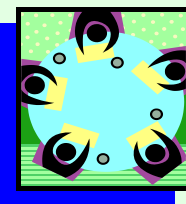
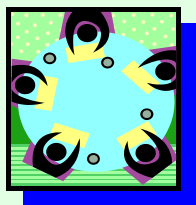
He hopes that you can see some progress in his paintings.

CARDIFF u3a NEEDS YOU!!



COULD YOU SPARE A FEW HOURS TO SIT
ON THE CARDIFF u3a COMMITTEE?

[Interested? Contact the Chair](#)



Photos: credit: Jonathan Guest

KLONDIKE GOLD WITHOUT BUS PASS AND PENSION BOOK - AND AN AMAZING CHANCE MEETING



"You're not from these parts." Before I'd time to reply at length, she continued in a Canadian accent, "but I know exactly where you are from. You're from Huddersfield." "Crikey" I replied, "you must be clairvoyant". Her eyes lit up and she laughed. "No I was born and brought up in Batley, a stones throw from Huddersfield, so your accent was familiar to me. I'm Kathryn and I'm the Mining Recorder for the Dawson District of Yukon".

This amazing chance encounter happened in 2002 when I was riding my BMW R1150RT motorcycle across Canada from the Pacific to the Atlantic. The journey embraced a 2000 mile 'detour' north to the Klondike Goldfields in temperature often as low as minus 20 degrees C.

Every adventure needs luck and this was mine. Kathryn had emigrated and as the Mining Recorder she was responsible for granting and controlling all the gold mining licences in that vast wilderness, An amazing chance meeting and here we were enjoying industrial strength Caribou Stew in the Greenwood Hotel, Whitehorse, Capital of Yukon. Despite mining being my life's work and even having worked underground deep in South African gold mines, I'd never visited Dawson City. Sitting in Kathryn's office I almost bought a mining licence for \$10 allowing me to prospect for gold. Sense prevailed and instead I found myself standing in Bonanza Creek, a stones throw from town. The world's biggest gold rush of 1896 started here. My thoughts focussed on those early pioneers, some 30,000 souls who braved unimaginable hardships searching elusive fortunes.



Bridge at Nitsutlin, Trans-Canada Highway



Plodding Dawson's ramshackle streets was like being on a film set of a wild west town at the turn of the 19th Century. Dirt roads, raised wooden sidewalks, wooden buildings, some leaning at crazy angles due to frost

heave. Later, I chatted to Penny in the Coffee Shop on Front Street. Her description of Dawson as "an end of the road town" was spot on. "All sorts come here running away from hectic lifestyles to find rare freedom. They can't run any further for the Klondike Highway ends here".

I've never been a gambler, but spending an evening with the delightful, vivacious Laura-Lee, one of Kathryn's assistants, in Diamond Tooth Gerties saloon evoked a spirit of raucous times past. No, we didn't bet, we talked incessantly and simply enjoyed being together.



Early the following morning when loading my bike outside Bombay Peg-gys, Laura-Lee turned up. She gave me a massive bag of humbugs with the instruction to make them last. I sucked the final one on arriving in Halifax, Nova Scotia some 8000 miles later. A call to Laura-Lee to let her know I'd crossed Canada safely and telling her I'd soon be flying eastwards to Wales. I often wonder what hap-

pened to Laura-Lee, when recalling that epic adventure.

Arrival in Halifax, Nova Scotia after 10 weeks on the road and 9669 miles covered from Pacific to Atlantic

Dr Edward G Hellewell

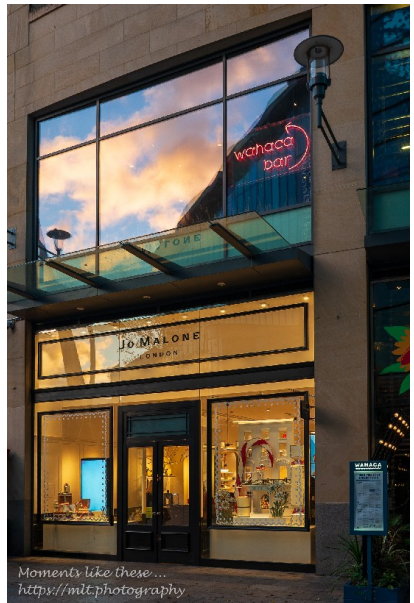




Photo:s credit Edward Hellewell



Photo credit: Yvonne Courtine



Moments like these...
<http://mlt.photography>

Photo credit: David Harrison



Another tale from 'over the Pond'

While I live in Illinois I spend April and October in Wales. My father emigrated and the Atlantic ocean notwithstanding our clan, UK and US, remains close. I grew up in and around Philadelphia and married a girl from Montana cowboy country. I'm a clinical psychologist, now retired; a tangible man who made his career in an intangible profession. After high school I went to work as a steel mill labourer. The money was great for an unskilled eighteen year old with opportunity for upward mobility. Moreover, it fed my habit of building hot rods. The plan, pursuit of an apprenticeship as either a millwright or an electrician, was scuttled after a near fatal industrial accident. The options were the draft or a college deferment and serve later. I chose college. I earned a sociology BA and, eventually, a PhD. Higher education took me off the shop floor and retirement provided the opportunity to return.

Things I enjoy include our pets, carpentry, electronics, vehicle restoration and I have a lifelong passion for classic rock and roll.



Linda, and our beloved dog Jelly and me at the Rockville, Indiana covered bridge festival. Jelly and I begin our day with a long walk and in Wales I fill that void as a Cardiff Dogs Home volunteer.

I believe in a duty to pay blessings forward. I do so building homes with **Habitat for Humanity** where the model is a hand up not a hand out. Families unable to secure a conventional loan, often through medical debt, judged to be good home ownership candidates are sold homes with a zero per cent mortgage and a 250 hour input into the building of the home.

The organization purchased a long out-of-service, but large former auto dealership/supermarket building which we converted to a charity shop. It was in terri-

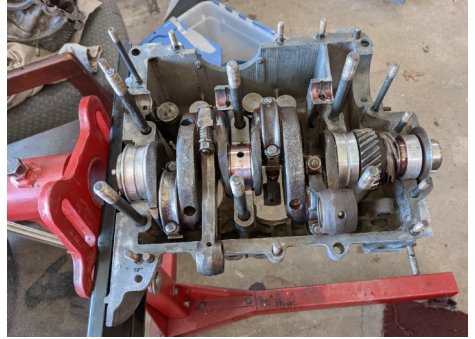


ble shape and the renovation required three years. Thieves stripped every inch of copper and frigid Illinois winter burst pipes. It is amazing what a few people with a vision can accom-

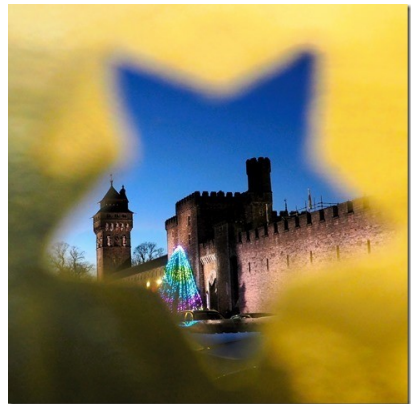
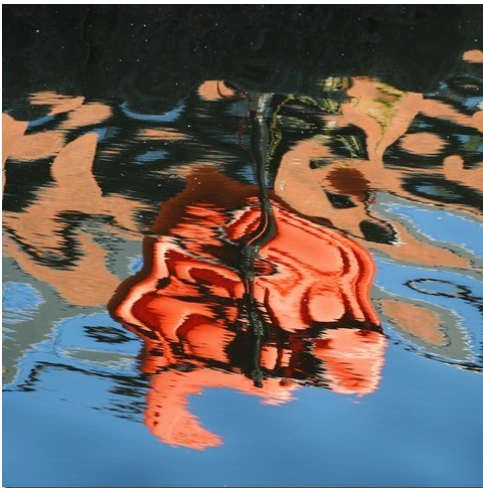
plish. The store grossed 750,00 USD in 2023 and profits fund home construction.



When a hoarder friend's wife issued an ultimatum to jettison some of his 'collection' I bought a 1962 VW Beetle. In near terminal condition when stashed thirty years ago, moisture and mounds of



mouse droppings damn near finished it off. I don't need much of an excuse to buy tools so I learned to weld and scoured 'Craig's list' for used equipment. I've rebuilt two engines that run like a Swiss watch. Body work is difficult and just remarkably labour intensive. Especially when done correctly by either welding in new panels or repairing dents with a hammer and dolly instead of body filler. **Its time to pay back u3a.** This April I'll assist David Harrison's coverage of Raspberry Pi in Media Matters. Margaret Richards has also offered time in Music Appreciation to address my interest in the effect music has had on our youth!

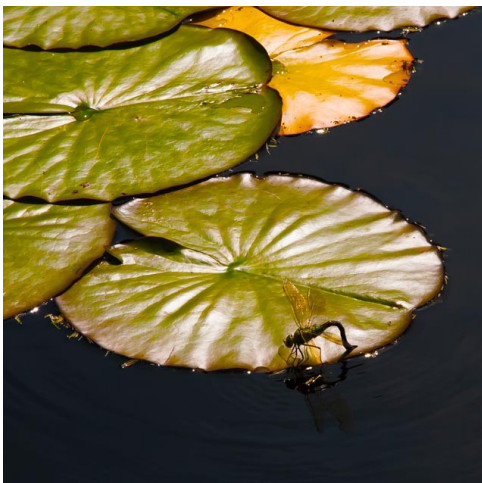
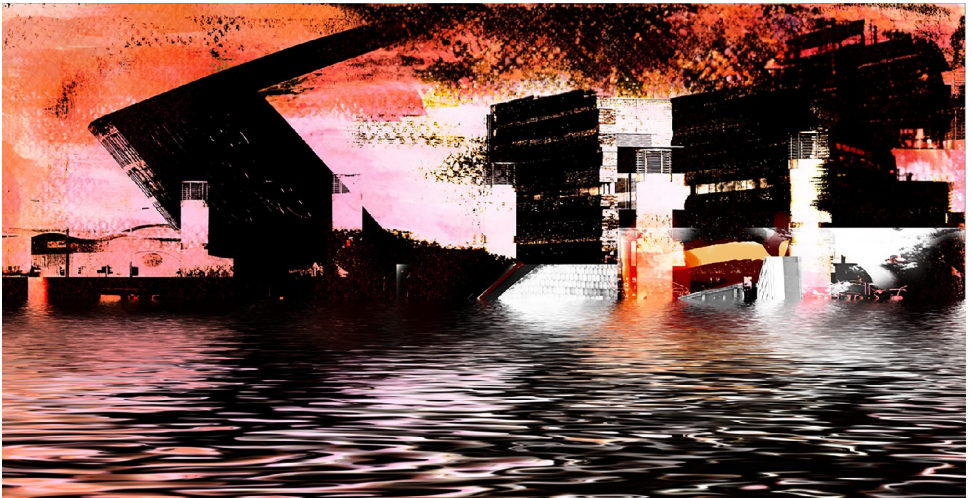


Photos: credit **Linda Price**

Peter Donovan

I don't attend many photography group's Wednesday meetings due to pressure of attending other Wednesday groups as well as a pretty active non u3a calendar. So I have to ration them out. These four pictures of mine are representative of the type of picture I like to take.

This montage below of Cardiff Bay 'in the future' was submitted to the u3a Llandough Exhibition of photography last year. this picture was sold mounted, with a print version also being sold.



The water lily was photographed at Dyffryn gardens which has lots of opportunities for really nice photographs. **Don't forget to look down!**



Cathays cemetery also provides a lot of opportunities for atmospheric photographs; you just have to keep your eyes open!

This photograph was taken in wintertime when the sun quite low in the sky - always a good time to take photographs.

Do you recognise this location?

Llandaff cathedral again photographed in the winter months.



Peter Donovan

My Very Bestest Christmas Present 2023

I always knew that as I grew older I could expect to lose some of my faculties. My eyesight started on the downward spiral when I hit my mid-forties. These days my walking steadiness isn't so good. Thankfully I've managed to keep my hair and my hearing is holding up. One problem though really sneaked up on me. This was totally unexpected. I started to lose my ability to open jam jars.

This was just so frustrating. I'd bought myself a couple of jar opening devices but to be honest, they didn't work too well. One involved passing a large rubber strap around the lid and sort of levering the lid off. It rarely worked. I certainly wouldn't let it anywhere near a jar of beetroot as my mind's eye gave me a clear indication of a possible disaster. I even started resorting to taking un-opened jars to my next-door neighbour. He has a black belt in Taekwondo.

I then learned that there was an electronic device that could possibly help me. I read about it. Studied some Youtube videos, then added it to my Santa list. After all, I'd been good.

Christmas arrived and there it was, in the bottom of my stocking. I couldn't wait to try it out.

Now, the device itself is no larger than a DVD cassette (remember them?). Shaped a bit like a rugby ball sliced in half with two sets of clumpy things underneath. It takes two AA batteries. I'm told that they last well over a year.

You place the device on top of the jar **and press the large button. It starts to whirr and chunter.** The clamps start to move in to grab the side and lid of the jar.

This really is quite mesmerizing. After about twenty seconds, you start to see the jar lid turning, and then with a satisfying POP! You have access to your jam/beetroot, pickled onions, whatever, without the need to disturb your neighbour.



Interested? Look for the YUET Electric Opener Can Jar Bottle Opener - less than £20!

Philip Edwards

Sonnet for AGM 2023 Concert

It was suggested by some of my recorder group colleagues that I submit my recently-composed sonnet, which I read at the 2023 AGM, for publication in this magazine. I put up a vigorous show of modest resistance for a second or two before pride and ambition got the better of me, so here it is.

I should add that it's not my first sonnet: I wrote my first when I was teaching **metaphysical poetry**

Just in case, I offer the following:

Metaphysical Poetry is highly intellectualized poetry marked by bold and ingenious conceits, incongruous imagery, complexity and subtlety of thought, frequent use of paradox, and often by deliberate harshness or rigidity of expression.

Ed (and I had to look it up)

to an A-level English Literature class in 1975, and tried to pass off my composition to my comprehensive school students - as an exercise to test their powers of literary analysis and poetic discrimination - as a sonnet written by an obscure 17th century poet (whom I called, convincingly, I thought, Copernicus Smythe, a contemporary of Shakespeare). I also thought that my sonnet was convincingly authentic in tone, style and content. With a straight face I encouraged them to examine the sonnet's poetic qualities: the skilful use of imagery, the emotional range and complexity, the classical Petrarchan structure, which they did for less than five minutes until one of them looked up and said "It's you, isn't it?"

Thoroughly disillusioned, I didn't attempt another sonnet for the next 40-odd years, and this is just my third composition. My recent efforts have avoided Copernicus Smythe's high-flown, self-dramatising classical pretension in favour of the safety of a more trivial, whimsical narrative. This sonnet is really just a fancy introduction to the short programme we played as part of the post-AGM entertainment in November 2023. If you don't rate it all you can blame the Recorder Group, of course – it was after all their idea to offer it to you. If you find any value or merit in it, then I suppose I'll have to take the credit for it.

Good gentlefolk, for your delight, shall we
Present these works of festive celebration,
Transforming dull committee cares to glee,
While offering a little education.

Perhaps the first recorder work e'er writ,
Allegedly by King Henry Number Eight,
'Pastime with Good Company' called he it,
Which speaks of courtly love, and youth, and fate.

Next comes from France the famed 'Official's Brawle',
Which British ears as 'Ding Dong Merrily' know,
Then 'Gloucester Wassail', below'd of drinkers all,
And 'Joy unto the World' will end our show.

We trust that you'll enjoy these songs in order,
And henceforth speak in praise of the recorder.

Martin Gordon



Moments like these ...
<https://milt.photography>

Photo credit:
DAVID HARRISON

IMAGES OF SPRING



Photo credits: **JIM BARTETT**



Photo credits :
PAULINE BEZODIS

Photo: credit:
JONATHAN GUEST



If you, dear reader, find the ending of this joint contribution from Dungeons and Dragons and the Wordsmiths groups intriguing, then why not join either (or even both) groups and seek enlightenment!



The Clearing of The Keep

The mission had sounded straightforward enough. The Town-Master of Phandalin, Harbin Wester, needed a secure fortification for the town's population because of the increasing threat of attacks from the enemy's army. The Town had already been attacked once in force and that had only just been repulsed thanks to a gift of magical weapons. As a result, the party had been contracted to find and clear out a Keep built by the miners many centuries ago. It was a fastness that could be defended in times of danger. Now it was abandoned and was rumoured to be 'haunted' by a monstrous presence that has been locked away within. Indeed as the party members paused to look at the structure it seemed to have been sealed to prevent anything getting out rather than anybody getting in, though getting in still presented them with a big problem. Clawing its way up the cliff face the Keep loomed out at them, its jagged silhouette a stark contrast against the sky. Unlike the noble castles of legend, this edifice exuded an aura of cold, calculated menace. Narrow, arrow-slit windows pierced the walls at intervals, offering only glimpses of the dark, watchful interior. A single, heavily fortified portcullis, studded with iron spikes and bound with thick chains, served as the only point of entry. The wind that whistled through the cracks and crevices of the keep carried suggestions of forgotten screams and tortured souls, adding to the oppressive atmosphere. Even the vines and ivies that grew up the cliff face seemed reluctant to climb its walls.

"Not very inviting is it," said Dolan.

Nanoc, agreed, "You're not wrong there. I'm not sure how we're supposed to get through that portcullis and I don't want to risk those murder holes above the gateway." The two fighters seemed the most cautious of the adventuring party.

Sildari, felt no such caution. She strode up to the wall and stroked the stones with her hand, considering them as though they were a lock that needed to be picked. After a few moments of thought, she turned to face Orbertasmas.

"Bert, if you cast Spider Climb onto me I'm sure I can get to the top of the keep. I'll take some ropes up with me in case I find a way in for us up there."

Bert nodded and began casting the spell. The final party member was Olivia, though she was usually referred to as Ollie by the party. The party relied on her for any healing they required. "Make sure you have your sending stone with you so that we can communicate," Ollie said. Sildari simply nodded and began climbing. She did indeed seem to have a spider's ability to climb a shear wall, something that was unnerving for the others to watch. On reaching the flat roof of the Keep, Sildari counted eight chimneys, six of which were too small to descend, but the ones on the east and west sides were large enough to climb down. She made her way down to the bottom of each in turn breaking through countless spider webs that filled them. The fireplace of each opened out into a room the East room being slightly larger than the room at the bottom of West Chimney. The doors out of the rooms were ajar and glancing out of the East room she could see an open space that was draped in dense spider webs. She reported her findings using the sending stones before heading back to the roof.



Photo credit: **Yvonne Courtine**

Flow

Birtherd from the source
you bubble into being,
a living, weeping thing.
Over a pillow of pebbles
you gurgle, bond, feed
from another of your kind,
ever growing and slowing,
diverging where obstacles
teach you a different way.
You babble over boulders,
gain strength in connections.
In maturity you billow onward
plunge over joyous cascades
and with roaring fury
work your rapid way
towards the edge of your world.
Before the end you slow
into a low sleepy delta
spreading enrichment.
When the ocean takes you,
your atoms return in a cycle
of never-ending renewal.
back to the roof.

Kristina Taylor

WHAT IS THE u3a?

Founded in 1982 the u3a is a UK-wide movement which brings together people in their 'third age' to develop their interests and continue their learning in a friendly and informal environment. If you're wondering what we mean by the third age - it is a time after you have finished working full-time or raising your family and have time to pursue your interests or just try something new. Members explore new ideas, skills and activities together. There are over a thousand u3as - of which Cardiff is one - with nearly 400,000 members worldwide.



Not yet a member but Interested in membership? You may wish to use the telephone number below as an alternative to emailing or using the website. Standard call charges apply.

07544 289434

Please leave a name and contact number and your call will be returned.

The Cardiff u3a website can be found at

<https://cardiffu3a.org/>

Mail can be sent to

City URC Church, Windsor Place, Cardiff CF10