Carmarthen u3a Caerfyrddin

Newsletter – June 2026

Letter from the Chair – Richard Swann

Dear members,

You have already received all the reports relating to the AGM, which when you receive this Newsletter, will be very nearly upon us. Amongst the reports is the Chair's report which I have had to write several weeks ago and I am now trying not to repeat what is in that report. However at the end of it I thanked the Committee for their hard work and since then there has been a change in committee membership. Les has stepped down and I thank him for all his contributions to the work of the committee and wish to welcome two new members who have been co-opted. They are Judith Holland and Harold Liberty. They both made very helpful contributions at our latest meeting.

At that meeting of the committee the question was asked if we had any First Aid cover at the monthly meeting and that extended to group meetings and other activities, particularly e.g. the Walking Group. If any of you are First Aid trained or have medical qualifications e.g. doctor or nurse would you let us know. The committee is also investigating the possibility of organising First Aid training so if you are interested in attending please let me know ASAP.

Another agenda item at the meeting was Pastoral Care. We had a discussion on what to do in the event of a member's illness/death which highlighted the question of emergency contact numbers which I have mentioned many times at monthly meetings. I urge you all to let Eric, as Membership Secretary, membership@carmarthenu3a.org.uk. This will be stored securely on our admin system which has limited accessibility to meet the GDPR regulations.

A second subject under this heading was that of members who cannot drive or have mobility issues and find it difficult to get to meetings. If you face such a situation please do let the committee members know so we can see if we can do anything to help get you to meetings. There are already several members where arrangements are in place should they need help.

I look forward to welcoming you to the AGM (where there will be cake and biscuits to go with your tea/coffee whilst you socialise).

Take care all

Richard

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Newsletter Editor – Ann Kitchen

Breaking News

- A bumper edition this month to catch up on the previous two month's news.
- Don't forget the AGM at 2:30 pm, 28th May at the Bowling Club for a prompt start with refreshments being served from 2:00.
- Our photographers in this edition are Ann, Eric, Gerwyn, Juliet, Mike, Rosemond and Peter. Thank you all.
- Registration is important at all the groups including the larger ones such as History and the Monthly Meeting. Can you please come to the registration desk to register your attendance before you rush off to have your tea and biscuit, otherwise you might slip through the net. For health and safety reasons we need to know you are there.

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Rosemond has an idea for a new group – **Bridge**



Come and learn how to play Bridge (no prior knowledge needed)
Bridge is an intriguing, exciting card game for all ages.
Not only does it give the player enjoyment, it keeps the brain active and encourages strategic planning.
She is looking for beginners, lapsed and experienced players to help with the tuition.
Does this sound as this is for you please contact rosemond@carmarthenu3a.org.uk

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Treasurer/Membership Report – Eric Kitchen

This is the final call to those who have yet to renew their £18 membership to pay by cash or cheque at the AGM next Thursday afternoon, 28th May. Alternatively payment can be made online into the u3a's account number 00526149, sort code 30-91-68. Membership will otherwise cease following the AGM.

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Monthly Meeting Presentations – Eleanor Baird

In a last minute change to the program, u3a member Harold Liberty stepped in to deliver a very interesting talk about Alan Turing and the work of code-breakers at Bletchley Park, many of whom were women. He included a demonstration of the circuitry within the famed Enigma machine, with the help of various volunteers from the floor. When questioned about the film The Imitation Game, Harold made the point that, in his opinion, it was not an accurate portrayal of Turing's life and work.

Many thanks go to Harold for filling in at such short notice.

If anyone would like to give a talk about a subject which they think would be of interest to other members, I would gladly take your details. eleanor@carmarthenu3a.org.uk

JUNE SPEAKER

Robert Ramshala-Southall, Community Hub Team Manager - Nacro Connecting Carmarthenshire will speak about their Live Well Drop-ins and the RNID.

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Philosophy Group – Chas Griffin

The Philosophy Group is still gently paddling through the shallows of the Esoteric Philosophy (EP), touching on the actual (but limited) value of religions, and of science, and the implications of rigorously pursuing logic. Some ideas that result are rather strange to western eyes, and some are quite startling. The challenge, as always, is 'can you fault the logic'?

The EP is very happy with the idea of multiple dimensions: a concept that physics is slowly struggling towards. One day Big Science will officially drop the Materialist fallacy that still ensnares so many scientists (especially in the life sciences) and reasoned 'cooperation' with the EP will become the norm. Thus will humanity move on...

If you would like to join in the melee, we'd love to welcome you!

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Back gammon – Kate Waldron 

We had another lively May meeting, and it's encouraging that members of our small group come together as often as possible as everyone has such busy lives nowadays.

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Spice up your Life – Kam Winchester

Many of us were looking forward to a new curry experience at the Spice Barn in Llanwrda this month. For reasons out of Kam's control this had to be cancelled therefore back to Ginger in May. Keep checking, who knows what will happen next!

The June meeting will also be at Ginger unless Kam knows differently? Please contact Kam if you are interested. kam@carmarthenu3a.org.uk

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Sunday Lunch Group – Chris Woodward.

Our June Sunday Lunch Club will be on Sunday 14th June at Cartref Cynnes, Llansteffan Road, Johnstown, Carmarthen, SA31 3NQ, and meeting for lunch at 12:30. Please do feel free to bring along any drink that you may like to enjoy with your lunch!

If you would like to attend please email Chris at chrisw@carmarthenu3a.org.uk by Tuesday 09th June.

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Book Club – Ann Kitchen 

We were all pleased to welcome Janet to the group this month who brought her own interesting views and comments about the chosen book – A God in Ruins by Kate Atkins, chosen by Diane.

An interesting discussion about education and the knock on effect it has on a person's life followed.

In June we shall be reading Restless by William Boyd as chosen by Sue.

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Tea rota for the next 3 monthly meetings



June	Gardening
July	Coffee Morning
September	World Faiths

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Knitting and Nattering – Ann Kitchen

Only a few of us this month but we still enjoyed the knitting and the nattering.

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Coffi a Chlonc – Peter Loughran

The June meeting of Coffi a Chlonc will be on the third Tuesday at 2.30pm. i.e. 16th June at a new venue, Adref, in Mansel Street. Then in July we may be trying Yr Egin, where we have been before.

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Film Club – Carole Sapsford

Monday 8th June, Penguin Lessons, a true story and a comedy with Steve Coogan

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Exploring World Faiths – Andrew Padfield

The June meeting of World Faiths will be an exploration of the teachings of the Baha`i faith. It will be led by Richard and Sheila Swann.

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10 Pin Bowling - Ann Kitchen

This is such fun and we are not competitive – honestly! Saying that Gerwyn and Frances must have had an interesting conversation that evening, ask them why when you see them.

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Short Mat Bowls – Eric Kitchen

Please let me know if you intend to join me, eric@carmarthenu3a.org.uk.

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Poetry Group – Pat Hodgkinson

A poem by Les always pleases our readers. Thank you Les.

Like a leaf floating down a stream,
You cannot predict your dream.
You cannot predict your destiny,
On times you have to accept uncertainty.

In the rapids, you may travel fast,
But as in life, it does not have to last.
For you may come to stagnant waters,
Where you float and wait and wonder.

Sailing on with the morning flow,
There is no choice of where you'll go.
The idea that you can predict your dream,
Is lost, you have to go down stream.

A change may come to confuse you all,
For there is the rumble of a water fall.
To toss and turn you upside down,
Take care, one slip and you may drown.

The best you can do is learn to swim,
A kick a stroke could help you win.
Have the will to stay afloat and thrive,
That way at least you'll stay alive.

No doubt this world will eventually unfold,
To tell your story as it's meant to be told.
You have the right to live and dream,
So, is it you, or the leaf that's in the stream?

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Art Group – Chris Driver

The Art Group is setting up another art exhibition in Cartref Cynnes this autumn. Keep checking the newsletter for further information. The standard was so high for the last one.

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Charabanc – Ann Kitchen

National Woollen Museum





Back in March I was asked by Frances if we could go to the National Woollen Museum. On one of those rare sunny but cold days off we all went to Felinfach Felindre. We were greeted warmly by the staff who gave us a brief talk about the history of the mill and the importance of the Welsh Woollen Industry. Afterwards there were operators explaining how the individual machines worked, their safety and even an opportunity to experience fleece carding.

We chose a good day to attend as the Carmarthen Spinners, Weavers and Dyers were also present and were able to answer our questions as they demonstrated their skills. As the rain kept off it also gave us an opportunity to mooch around the grounds. We did not forget the necessary coffee and cake.

The museum was preparing for a major refurbishment of their galleries so well worth a future visit.





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The Gwen John Exhibition: Strange Beauties

This was in true Charabanc style as we met at the station to catch the train to Cardiff. Here I must thank Dilys' son for his role in the organising as if it had been left to me we still would have been standing on the station.

How many of us had forgotten over the years what treasures there are to be found in our National Museum.

We were greeted by this magnificent tiger, still unsure why he was there, but he was useful for a photo opportunity.





As written in the Guardian's review "the moment you enter the exhibition you are plunged into her spiritual and austere existence."

Gwen John 1876 – 1939 was born in Haverfordwest and died in Dieppe having studied at the Slade school of fine art

The exhibition gave us an insight to her bohemian life as a woman artist in Paris at the turn of the C20th.

Her work often featured her attic room, friends and Edgar her cat.





Her combination of muted colours, simple pencil drawings, and brush strokes transformed her works to show great depth in the final composition. Personal letters and diaries also added to our experience and understandings.

Gwen John until recently has been in the shadow of her famous brother Augustus. However he himself wrote "fifty years after my death I shall be remembered as Gwen John's brother". How true this prophecy has become.

Even if you missed this u3a outing if you get a chance please visit this exhibition as its well worth a visit.

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Discussion Group – Peter Loughran

Another interesting and stimulating discussion - this time on a somewhat political theme i.e. our personal manifesto following the excitement of the recent election.

Our particular challenge was to identify the five things we would like the new Welsh Government to focus on and the five things we would **not** want to focus on. We drilled down into our priorities for health, education, transport, and the economy. If only we had gone into politics - wouldn't Wales be in a better position! The subject of funding and wealth creation featured significantly in our discussions and whether Wales should have a bigger slice of the cake. We felt that a better road network would make society and the economy run more efficiently - less wasted time navigating speed restrictions, road works and traffic delays.

There was quite a consensus about what needed to be done – now we need the funding, the political will and a vision for the future!

Next time we will look at the distinction between 'big government and small government', the kind of approaches in other countries and what might be best for the UK and indeed in Wales in so far as we have a choice. Everyone is welcome to join us on Wednesday June 10th at 2pm in CAVS.

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Digital Group – Margaret Nolan

Our digital sessions usually involve a 'drop-in' where you can get advice on any computer or mobile phone problems you may have. Tiff, one of our experts from the Learning Centre, also spoke in the May session about algorithms. She explained why, after you have been looking online at holidays, clothing, cuddly toys etc. you are bombarded with adverts regarding your search.
On 22nd June at 2:00 pm there will be another 'drop-in' session.

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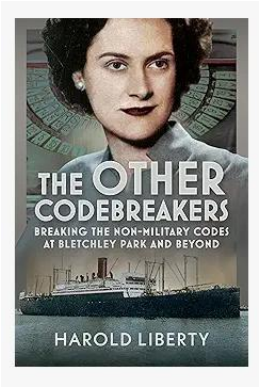


Listening to Music Group – Richard Swann

The music appreciation group will meet at 2.30 in CAVS (The Mount) on Wednesday 27th. I hope you can come and share your choice of music with us either on a cd or electronically. If you have any ideas on varying the format we can discuss them on Wednesday.

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History Group – Judith Holland



The speaker for the April meeting was Harold Liberty who talked about the code breakers of Bletchley Park. Harold posed the question, "what do we all already know about Bletchley Park"? It transpires that much that we consider facts about Station X are based on misinterpretation, exaggeration and myth, some "downright wrong". He exposed some of these during his talk.

Bletchley Park was called Station X because it was the 10th listening station for the Secret Intelligence Service. The Government Code and Cypher School at Bletchley Park was set up in 1919 after the 1st World War, and not in 1939 as many had thought.

Code breakers came from a diverse group of people. They were not all boffins recruited from the universities, many brought a range of skills with them including languages, intelligence and mathematics.

Harold spoke of the different forms of code; those based on substitution, where one letter is replaced by another, and of additive codes, where extra letters are added which then need to be stripped out by the decoder to make sense.

Turing's machine was not the first working computer, but a series of cylinders set, side by side. Tom Flowers developed the Colossus machine in 1944. This was the world's first programmable computer, and was designed to break the Lorenz Cipher not the Enigma Code. We had fun trying to crack a couple of simple codes, and looked at how messages were interpreted.

We decided not to visit Whitland Abbey as we had very few responses for a site visit.

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The speaker for the May History Group meeting was John Brandrick talking about Power before steam. He gave a very entertaining talk on different kinds of muscle power, from dog carts, to treadmills. He talked about how all kinds of machinery were powered, pig drawn contraptions, horse and ox driven machinery, and also that powered by man. We even had an image of a Coprolite Mill, excavating dinosaur dung for fertiliser, The talk was very well illustrated with lots of images produced by John, from paintings and early photographs.



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The next talk will be given on June 17th by Bruce Wallace on the Picton Monument and Frieze. If you haven't seen the Waterloo Freize it can be found in the room at the bottom of the main staircase in the museum in Abergwili. I am sure you are all familiar with the monument and its now somewhat contentious place in the history of Carmarthen. The talk will begin at 2: 00 pm in the Bowls Club, refreshments available on arrival.

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Many thanks also to Eric A for his contribution of History magazines each month. They are always available at the registration desk. Well worth a read.

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Garden Group – Kathie Wareham (Coordinator)

April Garden Leader – Heather Goodwin Jones.

Spring is such a beautiful time of the year.



The April Garden Visit was to Bryn Teg, Capel Iwan. The weather was glorious, the garden beautiful and the host, Colin, was so knowledgeable. What an immense amount of work had gone into this gorgeous garden. This is a garden on two tiers with an ancient laurel tree, rock garden and many other interesting features.


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May Garden Leader – Maud Jones.

The 22nd May Garden visit will be at 74 Castle St, Loughor. This is an urban, beautifully landscaped terrace garden with an ancient chapel creating a classical and elegant atmosphere with stunning views over the river Loughor. The garden is divided into two sections. The upper section connected to the Grade II listed house which was home to the Knights Templar and the Knights Hospitaller. The lower level with stone statues, urns and planters was created from scratch by the current owners. maud@carmarthenu3a.org.uk

We look forward for the report and photographs.

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The June Garden visit will be led by Rosemond (rosemond@carmarthenu3a.org.uk)

This month we shall visit Llwyngarreg, Llanfallteg Whitland SA34 0XH on the 26th June at 2:00. The group visited this garden two years ago but in a different season. Entry fee is £8 with £4 for tea and cakes so let me know by the 12th June so I can book our places. Please note limited places are available.

There are gravel paths and plenty of seats placed around the garden.

As we are travelling west we can meet at Nant y Ci car park at 1:15. Please let me know whether you wish to attend and whether you have arranged car sharing.

The garden is 19 miles west of Carmarthen. Follow the A40 as far as the Llanddewi Velfrey roundabout where you turn left into the village of Llanddewi, go past the petrol station and take the next right turn for Llanfallteg. Go through that village and approx half a mile further on there will be a NGS yellow sign for a turning to the right which will get you there.

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Dawn Chorus Walk – Eric Kitchen

At 7:00 o'clock on a bright Thursday morning (whilst others slept!) eight intrepid members were at the Bishop's Park to enjoy the bird song – although not exactly a dawn chorus, close enough.

Apart from the joys of walking through the park we were led by Huw, our volunteer guide, across the meadow pass the oxbow lake to emerge at the rear of St David's church before sampling the delights of Stacey's Kitchen.

Along the way we took the opportunity to view the works taking place in the walled garden as seen from the temporary bridge the contractors constructed to access the garden.

Twenty three different bird calls were identified, many of the 'usual suspects' such as tits, thrushes, robins, wrens etc but also a Cetti's Warbler, Tree Creeper, Greylag Goose and a Tree Pipit. On the lake we witnessed two female Mallards shepherding 12 Mallardettes and a couple of mute swans aggressively arguing about territorial rights on the lake - seems it was that time of year!
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Walking Group – Eric Kitchen (Coordinator)

April Walk Leader – Mike Woodward.

The walk started from Pen-y-bedd woods, unfortunately it was raining with 10 people braving the elements. We walked down Factory Road and on to the Wales Coastal Path heading towards Burry Port. Fortunately by then it had stopped raining and we then crossed the golf course on to the old canal/railway path and back to the start. A good lunch in Daisy's Little Coffee Shop was enjoyed.







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May Walk Leader – Peter Loughran.

We had an enthusiastic group of 12 on our 3.5 mile walk starting and finishing at the Museum.

Peter outlined some of the key milestones in the history of the site from its early life as a college for the training of priests, its 400 year reign as the home of the bishops of St David and its eventual transformation into the Museum that we are now familiar with.

The first part of the walk was within Parc Yr Esgob alside the meadow, up the steps of the end and up to the cycle path. From there we walked through the village over the Gwili River and the bypass and along a secluded path behind the hospital. We took a 'water break' at the neglected park/picnic area overlooking the new Glangwili railway station. At this point, given time constraints, we decided to take a shorter route up the Lampeter road to join the path adjacent to Castell Pigyn estate.

From there it was plain sailing back along Castell Pigyn Road passing some landmark buildings, over the pedestrian bridge and back to our starting point.

At the end we had an enjoyable visit to Stacey's café where we sampled the delicious coffee and cakes and lunchtime delights. A perfect end to a glorious morning!









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June Walk Leader – Suzanne Tate Price.

The walk will start in the main car park at Llansteffan beach (SA33 5LW), meeting at 10:30. There are toilets there. We will walk along the beach to Scott's Bay where we can stop for a drink so please bring a flask of coffee or cold drink if you wish. Then we will go up the path past St Anthony's well, turning right along the road, past the turning for the castle, making a detour to the castle (optional) and then walk down into the village of Llansteffan. We can stop for a drink and lunch at The Castle Inn in the village but please let me know who wants to stay for lunch so I can book a table. The walk will be around 3.5 miles with some steep, muddy sections.
If you are interested please contact suzanne@carmarthenu3a.org.uk

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Who's who on the committee.

Richard Swann	Chair	chair@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Vacancy	Vice-chair	vicechair@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Susan Edwards	Secretary	secretary@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Eric Kitchen	Treasurer	treasurer@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Eric Kitchen	Membership	membership@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Ann Kitchen	Group Coordinator	ann@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Ann Kitchen	Newsletter Editor	editor@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Ann Kitchen	Network Representative	ann@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Peter Loughran	Web Editor	peter@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Peter Loughran	Facebook Editor	peter@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Harold Liberty	Committee Member	
Judith Holland	Committee Member	

Committee Assistants

Anne Priest	Minute Secretary	
Eleanor Baird	Speaker Secretary	speaker@carmarthenu3a.org.uk

Useful Websites

Carmarthen u3a website is: www.carmarthenu3a.org.uk

The West Wales Network website is: West Wales Network - Home - Wales Region

The national u3a website is: u3a - Welcome to the u3a

June 2026 Group Activities

1st	10:30	Monday	Coffee Morning	Ivy Bush	chris@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
1st	14:00	Monday	World Faiths	The Mount (CAVS)	andrew@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
2nd	10:00	Tuesday	The Park Walkers	Velodrome	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
4th	14:00	Thursday	Literature	Ivy Bush	pthacker@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
5th	14:00	Friday	Scrabble	Library	angela@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
5th	14:30	Friday	Start Speaking Welsh	Wesleyan Church	frances@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
8th	14:00	Monday	Knitting & Nattering	Ivy Bush	ann@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
8th	14:00	Monday	Film	Library	carole@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
9th	10:00	Tuesday	The Park Walkers	Velodrome	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
9th	14:00	Tuesday	Poetry	The Mount (CAVS)	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
9th	14:00	Tuesday	Philosophy	The Mount (CAVS)	chas@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
10th	09:30	Wednesday	Art	Cartref Cynnes	chris@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
10th	10:30	Wednesday	Backgammon	Library	kate@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
10th	14:00	Wednesday	Discussion	The Mount (CAVS)	peter@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
11th	13:45	Thursday	Short Mat Bowls	Bancyfelin Hall	eric@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
14th	12:30	Sunday	Sunday Lunch	Cartref Cynnes	chrisw@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
15th	11:00	Monday	10 pin bowling	Excel Bowling Club	ann@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
15th	14:00	Monday	Digital	Learning Centre	margaret@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
15th	14:00	Monday	Book Club	Ivy Bush	ann@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
16th	10:00	Tuesday	The Park Walkers	Velodrome	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
16th	14:30	Tuesday	Coffi a Chlonc	Adref	peter@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
17th	14:00	Wednesday	History	Bowling Club	judith@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
19th	10:30	Friday	Walking	Llansteffan	eric@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
19th	14:30	Friday	Start Speaking Welsh	Wesleyan Church	frances@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
22nd	10:00	Monday	Committee		secretary@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
23rd	10:00	Tuesday	The Park Walkers	Velodrome	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
23rd	14:00	Tuesday	Philosophy	The Mount (CAVS)	chas@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
24th	09:30	Wednesday	Art	Cartref Cynnes	chris@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
24th	14:30	Wednesday	Listening to Music	The Mount (CAVS)	richard@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
24th	18:00	Wednesday	Spice up your Life	Ginger	kam@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
25th	14:00	Thursday	Monthly Meeting	Bowling Club	richard@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
26th	14:00	Friday	Garden	Llanfallteg	rosemond@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
30th	10:00	Tuesday	The Park Walkers	Velodrome	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk

Times and venues as provided by Group Leaders, please check with them.