Carmarthen u3a Caerfyrddin

Newsletter – August 2026

Letter from the Chair – Richard Swann

Dear members,

I'm afraid I must start the month's letter with some sad news. As some of you will know, Carole Sapsford has passed away. She was a very active member of Carmarthen u3a and will be sorely missed. Our condolences to Fred.

Regarding the cancellation of last month's monthly meeting. I am not really in a position to comment as at the time we were on an arctic cruise, but I am now getting an idea of what you were all experiencing and am finding the heat very difficult to cope with and hope you are finding ways to 'keep cool and carry on'. I sincerely hope that by the end of the month the heat wave is over and the committee is not faced with the prospect of another cancellation.

As I reported at the AGM the committee is in the process of reviewing how Carmarthen u3a is functioning and how we take it into the future. As a start to the process we have been reviewing the policies. As part of this the subject of data protection came up which reminds me to ask you all to remember that if you change your address or contact details to inform the membership secretary membership@carmarthenu3a.com. I can assure you that the information we hold is done securely in accordance with data protection law.

Coming up in October Peter has organised a 1st Aid course and Andrew a talk about Skanda Vale, keep reading for information on how to register your interest.

Looking forward to seeing you at the next monthly meeting.

Richard

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Newsletter Editor – Ann Kitchen



Breaking News

- August tends to be a 'silly season' so please check with the group leader if you are unsure if your group is still running this month. Many groups are stopping for the August break.
- Our photographers this month are Margaret, Liz and Anne.
- Unfortunately for different reasons Suzanne, Rosemond and Eleanor had to cancel their events last month. Suzanne had organised a walk in Llansteffan followed by lunch in the pub, Rosemond another popular garden visit and Eleanor the Monthly Meeting which is our main meeting focus. When this happens it can be frustrating and disheartening for the organiser concerned. A great

deal of hard work goes on behind the scenes to enable things to run smoothly for us members to enjoy on the day. Thank you on behalf of everyone to the three of them for what you did.

- This thank you is also being extended to all our Group Leaders and Coordinators. Without their hard work and organisation our u3a couldn't function.
- If you are intending going to the Sunday Lunch or Spice up Your Life please can you book in advance. Also can you let Chris W or Kam know if you wish to cancel. The various restaurants need this information please don't just turn up. chrisw@carmarthenu3a.org.uk or kam@carmarthenu3a.org.uk.
- Rosemond has been busy trying to secure a grant for our u3a to promote Welsh culture for our non Welsh speakers and Welsh Learners. Her application has already got through the first round. By the time this Newsletter goes out we shall know if she has been successful. Well done her for showing such initiative.
- As we all know by now The National Eisteddfod this year is coming from North Pembrokeshire and has picked up on the name of Eisteddfod y Garreg Las after the blue stones of the Preseli. A huge thank you to Olivia, Rosemond, David, Margaret and Ann for offering to give up their time to volunteer on the u3a stand on the Friday 7th and the Saturday 8th August. If you are intending visiting the Eisteddfod on those days please call in to the u3a stand to say hello and offer your support.
- As many of you have seen Carmarthen u3a has a bilingual advertising flyer which we use at publicity events. It needs updating. Do you have experience of design and marketing? Would you be interested in taking on this creative role? Get in touch with the committee.
- Thank you to all the Book Club readers and the 10 Pin Bowlers when I had to suddenly cancel the July meeting because of a small pink pig who answers to the name of Peppa. I appreciated you all being so understanding. It was such a fun day for us as a family.
- Peter has arranged a First Aid Course for us to attend on Thursday 1st October. 15 to 20 participants could be accommodated so places will be limited and attendees would receive a certificate.It will be led by Sean Llewellyn-Betts, deputy division manager for Carmarthen St John's Ambulance at their premises on Barn Road / John Street car park. The centre is located at the top end of the John Street car park. There is disabled access from the Barn Road entrance.

  The course will be free but as a charity a donation would be much appreciated. It will cover the following:

Assessing an incident	Bites and stings	Bleeding and bruising	Bleeding severe
Burns and scalds	Chest pains	Communication and casualty care	Resuscitation
Fainting and shock	Choking	Bone, muscle and joint injuries	Unresponsive
Primary survey			

  If you are interested please sign the list at the back of the hall at the next Monthly Meeting or contact Peter peter@carmarthenu3a.org.uk

  Thank you Peter for doing this.

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Treasurer/Membership Report – Eric Kitchen

Summer time is usually a quiet time for finances and membership and this year is no different with a number of groups taking a well-earned rest. At the end of June we had £2,150 in our accounts with membership remaining at 148.

With regard to Gift Aid I'll remind you that if anyone's circumstance has changed such that they can no longer Gift Aid or they now can or changed address since their original agreement, please let me know as the records need to be kept up to date.

For all members any change of address also needs to be advised to update the u3a's admin system (Beacon).

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Back gammon – Kate Waldron 

We were delighted to have two guests to join us this month, and we hope they felt welcome. They enjoyed learning about this game which they hadn't played before. Hopefully, they will now join u3a, and we will see them again next month.

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West Wales u3a Network Meeting – Ann Kitchen

It was raised at our AGM that our members want more awareness of what happens at the Network meetings and other u3as in our catchment.

At the last meeting Carmarthen was represented by David (Vice Chair of the Network Committee), Richard (our Chair), Ann (Network Rep) and Peter (Webmaster).

Here are some pointers of particular interest to Carmarthen. The full report is available on the West Wales Webpage (West Wales Network - Home - Wales Region) also The Third Age Trust (u3a - Welcome to u3a).

- We now have a West Wales Network Logo from the Third Age Trust (TAT)
- TAT has provided bilingual and generic Welsh u3a advertising leaflets.
- New Incident forms have been devised by TAT and these will be distributed to all Group Leaders in the near future by Ann.
- There is a possibility of a 'Birds of a feather' approach for key role officers throughout the network to get together to share ideas and support.
- All u3as were thanked for their support at the National Eisteddfod.
- Increase security for WhatsApp groups to maintain confidentiality and not breach GDPR.
- Ann shared her report for Carmarthen u3a of past and future events.

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Monthly Meeting Presentations – Eleanor Baird

The speaker who was to have delivered a talk at last month's meeting cancelled to be re-scheduled to early 2027. Thank you Eleanor for doing this.

In July the speaker will be the singing celebrant Amanda Painting. The former cruise ship performer will talk about the role of a celebrant. There will be singing involved so this really does sound like an afternoon of good fun.

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Bridge Group – Rosemond Halls

If you are interested in this new group, please contact rosemond@carmarthenu3a.org.uk

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Book Club – Ann Kitchen

Unfortunately I had to cancel the last book group at the last minute. Thank you all for being so understanding.

Back to normal in August when we shall be discussing Pat's choice of 'Absolutely and Forever' by Rose Tremain. The library's new book box scheme will also be discussed.

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Philosophy Group – Chas Griffin

There's an underlying similarity to all the great religions which tallies neatly with the understandings of the Esoteric Philosophy. This similarity has long been noted, and is often called 'The Perennial Philosophy'. Aldous Huxley wrote a very readable book of the same name. Recommended.

If all the great religions deep down agree, and quantum physics seems to hint at a very similar conclusion, then maybe the Esoteric Philosophy contains a lot of sense?

If you'd like to dig a little into these strange ideas to see if the logic holds for you, then please do come along to our next meeting in an AIRCONDITIONED room at CAVS at 2:00 pm on Tuesday 25th July. Yes, it's AIRCONDITIONED, honest. Just thought I'd mention it.

'Still struggling to understand what'bossit all abaht!!'

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Sunday Lunch Group – Chris Woodward.

The Sunday Lunch Club will be on Sunday 9th August at 12:30 at Amelia's Vintage Tearoom at Pembrey Airport, Pembrey, Bury Port, SA16 0HZ. This is a quaint tearoom at Pembrey Airport serving among other food Vintage Afternoon Tea and Sunday Lunch!

Directions- after Kidwelly look out for the sign for Pembrey Airport - the Tearoom is signposted once you have turned off the main road towards the Airport.

The current owners of Amelia's Vintage Tearoom are retiring at the end of August so we thought it would be good to go before it closes!

Sunday lunch costs £14.95 and puddings are available at around £5.50 - being a Tearoom there is a selection of cakes included as well as puddings like crumble and custard and cheesecake!

Amelia's serves hot and cold drinks but not alcohol. You are very welcome to bring along your own alcoholic drink to enjoy with your meal. If you would like to attend please email Chris at chrisw@carmarthenu3a.org.uk by Tuesday 4th August.

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Tea rota for the next 3 monthly meetings



July	Coffee Morning
September	World Faiths
October	Park Walkers

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Coffi a Chlonc – Peter Loughran

In July we moved again having recently been to Yr Adref and Wetherspoons. Yr Egin, as the home of S4C, has a strong Welsh flavour and presents the right kind of ambience and cultural setting. We were a very small group this time - just three of us. Nevertheless or perhaps as a result, we had a very good chat.

However I am wondering if the group is sustainable. Our numbers have been falling and of course there are other groups for Welsh learners / speakers in Carmarthen. Anyway we will see how we get on in September and how much enthusiasm there is to continue. Perhaps it is time for someone new at the helm! In the modern age the 'life cycle' of leaders is very short as we have seen recently in politics!

We will meet in the Ivy Bush hotel at 2:00 pm on Tuesday 15th September.

Croeso cynnes iawn i bawb!

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Knitting and Nattering – Ann Kitchen



Margaret shared this photo with us this month. Read the words, perhaps many more should take up Knitting. Thank you Margaret.

Rosemarie was motivated following the previous month's discussion on the work of Kaffe Fassett. She has decided to copy a design from one of his books. Graph paper has been used for accuracy of the pattern and we are all looking forward to seeing the finished result.

This group is definitely not just nattering, with many a talented member.

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Short Mat Bowls – Eric Kitchen

There are currently 14 members listed as participants of this group who receive reminder emails each month. Of the 14 perhaps only 7 might be described as frequent flyers with last week's attendance falling to 3 as a result of various appointments. With such low numbers on receipt of the reminder emails I ask that recipients let me know if they will or will not be attending as I may need to cancel the session if there are too few.

Having said that there will be a summer recess with no session in August anyway.

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Exploring World Faiths – Andrew Padfield

There is no meeting in August.

SPECIAL NOTICE from Andrew and Richard

The May visit to Skanda Vale was interesting but our guide, Brother Andy, explained that with more time there was a lot more he could tell us. Afterwards several members said they would like to learn more about it and about its founder. Also, some members who were unable to join the visit have said they too would like to know more about Skanda Vale. Brother Andy has therefore agreed to give a more detailed talk about Skanda Vale to the World Faiths group on Monday 5th October at 2:00 pm. If you are interested in coming to listen to Brother Andy, and so that we have some idea of the numbers involved. A suitable venue can then be booked. Please let Ann know - preferably by early September ann@carmarthenu3a.org

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At the July meeting Richard and Sheila completed their presentation on the Baha'i Faith. Richard explained that the world Governing body is the Universal House of Justice (UHJ) which is seated on Mt Carmel in Haifa, Israel and is based on a bottom up system with the UHJ at the top of a triangle. Annually every adult member of the Baha'i Faith has a vote for members of their Local Spiritual Assemblies (LSA) and also for an area representative to go to National Convention to vote for the members of the National Spiritual Assemblies (NSAs). Every 5 years all the members of the NSAs in the world go to the International Convention in Haifa to vote for the 9 members of the UHJ. In all cases the voting is by secret ballot. Nominations and campaigning are forbidden.

At this point Andrew pointed out that other religions have faced schisms to which Richard replied that this could not happen in the Baha'i Faith. The process for the establishment of the UHJ was laid down by Baha'u'llah in His Last Will and Testament stating that it is a divine institution.

Andrew asked why it is situated in Haifa? It was explained that Baha'u'llah and His Family had been exiled from Persia by the Ottoman empire and ended up just outside Haifa and Baha'u'llah had indicated that the Shrine to His predecessor, the Bab, should be built on Mt Carmel. Baha'u'llah had not been executed, as the Bab had been, because of His noble family's background.

Mention was made of Skanda Vale where there are idols to be worshipped. Richard explained that in the Baha'i Faith worship of idols is not allowed. There is only one photograph of Baha'u'llah in the archives building on Mt Carmel and pilgrims can walk past the photograph but are only allowed a very brief moment to see it.

The session finished with Richard repeating the often used phrase in the Faith. "The Earth is one Country and Mankind its Citizens" and we left with a feeling of agreement around that.

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Discussion Group – Peter Loughran

This month our discussion focused on the topic of housing - private, community and public sector. The whole issue of housing is very much on the political agenda at the present time especially with 'new' governments in both Cardiff and Westminster. Malcolm provided a set of sub -topics for us to address, e.g. a balance of social, private and community housing; an expansion of social housing; improvements in the private rental sector; sustainable and climate-resistant housing to name but a few. Many of our members are currently grappling with the issue of what is suitable for us in our 'third age' and indeed many of us have downsized and moved into more appropriate and sustainable accommodation. A very important topic and indeed a very relevant one.

We will take a break in August and resume our discussions at the usual time and place in September i.e. Wednesday 9th September at 2:00 pm. No doubt we will find another engaging topic to get our teeth into.

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Start Speaking Welsh – Frances Thesiger

The Start Speaking Welsh group is taking a break. We hope to reconvene in September but that does rather depend on the numbers. If you think you might be interested in joining us for an hour, twice a month, please let me know and I'll add your name so that we can contact you with the details. It is a small, friendly group and we'd love to see you. frances@carmarthenu3a.org.uk.

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Music Appreciation Group – Richard Swann

The next meeting will be on 30th September at 2:30 pm, everyone is welcome to come to CAVS, The Mount, Queen St.

Bring a CD or electronic version or just tell us your choice and we will try to find it on Spotify or YouTube. Your choice can be of any genre, the idea is to discuss your likes and dislikes with each other and you may come to appreciate something which you previously thought you didn't like. It does happen!

If you would just like to come along to see if it is of interest to you please do so and you could join in the discussion. No commitment to join the group.

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History Group – Judith Holland

The History Group meeting for July was held on Tuesday the 14th in the Archives in Carmarthen. Hayden Burns gave us a guided tour. The archive store was beautifully cool on such a hot day. He talked about the collections and the history of the archives in Carmarthen. They have a wonderful resource of ecclesiastical records, prison records, parish registers and old maps and documents dating back as far as the 14th century.

I hope it will encourage some of you to use the archives in future. You can use the computers in the library to access Ancestry online, without having to pay a subscription, if you want to research your family history.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 16th September, back in the Bowls Club at 2:00 pm. The speaker will be Sian Swann talking about Amelia Matilda Murray, the daughter of Bishop Murray. She grew up in the Bishop's Palace at Abergwili, and was a somewhat controversial figure.

Enjoy the summer break.

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Spice up your Life – Kam Winchester

After July this group is going to be mothballed for a while. Further details to follow.

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Walking Group – Eric Kitchen (Coordinator)

Nigel and Liz led July's walk at Lawrenny on the Cleddau estuary. 10 of us walked about 3 miles on a very hot day from Lawrenny Quay.

The first mile through ancient oak woods was cool and brought us to an abandoned scout hut. Looking up-river we could see the village of Llangwm on the opposite bank - a location for a walk next year, perhaps.

Here the route leaves the Cleddau to follow Garron Pill with its variety of water birds. We then took the road up to the village which has some attractive restored cottages.

At the church we opted to follow footpaths which offer fabulous views of the estuary downstream. All that remains of the big house that once stood at the top of the hill is the walled garden wall!

The path took us back through woods to emerge near the Yacht Club and then on to the Quayside Tearoom where crab sandwiches proved to be the popular choice for lunch.

A very enjoyable walk in such good company.













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Please note the following from Eric:

Over the years there have been many members who have lead the walks (with greatful thanks) but there comes a time when they understandably step down. Mindful of this, earlier in the year a seemingly well attended meeting for prospective leaders was held. Unfortunately general interest did not translate into any new leaders so as stated by me in the last newsletter we now have very few members prepared to lead a walk.

With this in mind I've decided there will be no u3a walk in August, although Mike and Chris will be leading in September. Details on this next month.

This has always been a mainstay group for the u3a and not to put undue strain on the few who will lead we need others to come forward. Have a chat with former and present leaders to see what's involved and do contact me if you're interested (eric@carmarthenu3a.org.uk).

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Garden Group – Kathie Wareham (Coordinator)



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June garden visit leader – Rosemond Halls

It was with regret that this garden visit had to be cancelled. Thank you Rosemond for everything you had done in advance.

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July Garden Visit Leader – Anne Priest

Friday, 24th July at 2:00 pm at Laswern Farm, Pontyberem, Llanelli. SA15 5BP. Admission is £5 (cash or card).

21 members enjoyed a lovely visit to Laswern Garden which is a member of the NGS. We were shown around by the very knowledgeable owners, Graham and Ann who were passionate about their small holding.

A number of seating areas in the flower garden to enjoy tea and cake in good company ensured that the visit was relaxed and enjoyable and conversation flowed.

£207 was raised on the day for the NGS charity.







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August Garden Visit Leader – Suzanne Price Tate

Note it's a week earlier than normal to avoid Bank Holiday traffic at Treffgarne Hall, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire SA62 5PJ on Friday 21st August at 2:00 pm. £6 entry fee (cash or card).

The Hall has a stunning hilltop location with panoramic views: the handsome Georgian house provides a formal backdrop to a garden of 4 acres with wide lawns and themed beds. The focal point is the walled garden, with a double rill and pergolas, and is planted with a multitude of borderline hardy exotics. An eclectic collection of unusual trees and shrubs include species rhododendrons, magnolias, hoherias, embothriums and crinodendrons. The garden also features large-scale sculptures, a cherry avenue, summer border, heather bed, gravel garden, stumpery, rose garden and a large greenhouse.

Depending on availability there may be plants for sale with the owners Jackie and Martin Batty happy to lead a guided tour or for you to wander on your own. The gardens are not suitable for wheelchairs with gravel paths, uneven paving, steps and grass areas. There is a toilet on the ground floor.

Refreshments on offer will be £6 for tea and cake (please advise dietary requirements when booking).

DIRECTIONS – What3words app – doubt.thrones.awesome. Go through the village and follow road round sharply to left, the hall ¼ mile further on left. Parking is available for 6 or 7 cars so please arrange to car share where possible.

Please confirm if you would like to come along by 12th August to suzanne@carmarthenu3a.org.uk

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The fund raising event CAWL at Cegin Hedyn

A large group of us attended the fund raising event which was held at Cegin Hedyn. During the event six local, very worthwhile, organisations bid for the funding on offer. All attendees heard the submissions and ultimately voted for the 3 winners.

Rosemond spoke clearly, with humour and a great deal of persuasion in her presentation. She really did do her best to create awareness for our u3a. Unfortunately she wasn't successful with her bid this time but one will never know what you can achieve unless you give it a try. Well done Rosemond.

(I must also mention Cegin Hedyn served us delicious cold vegetable soup, foccacia bread and cakes. If you have never attended this 'pay what you can afford' café in the town give it a try. Support Deri and his team for this excellent cause. You won't regret it).

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Who's who on the committee.

Richard Swann	Chair	chair@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Harold Liberty	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
Judith Holland	Committee Member	judith@carmarthenu3a.org.uk

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

August 2026 Group Activities

3rd	10:30	Monday	Coffee Morning	Ivy Bush	chris@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
4th	10:00	Tuesday	The Park Walkers	Velodrome	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
6th	14:00	Thursday	Literature	Ivy Bush	pthacker@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
7th	14:00	Friday	Scrabble	Library	angela@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
7th		Friday	Eisteddfod	Llantwd, Pembs	
8th		Saturday	Eisteddfod	Llantwd, Pembs	
9th	12:30	Sunday	Sunday Lunch	Amelia's Tearoom	chrisw@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
10th	14:00	Monday	Knitting & Nattering	Ivy Bush	ann@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
11th	10:00	Tuesday	The Park Walkers	Velodrome	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
11th	14:00	Tuesday	Poetry	The Mount (CAVS)	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
11th	14:00	Tuesday	Philosophy	The Mount (CAVS)	chas@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
12th	09:30	Wednesday	Art	Cartref Cynnes	chris@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
12th	10:30	Wednesday	Backgammon	Library	kate@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
17th	11:00	Monday	10 Pin Bowling	Excel Bowling Club	ann@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
17th	14:00	Monday	Digital	Learning Centre	margaret@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
17th	14:00	Monday	Book Club	Ivy Bush	ann@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
18th	10:00	Tuesday	The Park Walkers	Velodrome	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
21st	14:00	Friday	Garden		suzanne@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
24th	10:00	Monday	Committee	The Mount (CAVS)	secretary@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
25th	10:00	Tuesday	The Park Walkers	Velodrome	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
25th	14:00	Tuesday	Philosophy	The Mount (CAVS)	chas@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
26th	09:30	Wednesday	Art	Cartref Cynnes	chris@carmarthenu3a.org.uk

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