Carmarthen u3a Caerfyrddin

Newsletter – October 2026

Letter from the Chair – Richard Swann

Dear Members,

As I write this letter (at the beginning of September) the quiet month of August, as far as the u3a is concerned, has come to an end and we now swing into action again. Autumn is here and very welcome rain returned just in time for the Bank Holiday.

I trust those of you who have been holidaying have enjoyed yourselves and have not melted.

You will have seen reports of those groups which met in August in last month's newsletter. I look forward to finding out what has happened since.

Although we did not meet in August the committee has not been inactive with lots of communication by email. During our review of policies, it has become apparent that members of the committee, as charity trustees, are required by the Charity Commission to undergo Safeguarding training as we collectively have a duty of care to all members. Thank you to Harold who is liaising with CAVS who are providing this training.

Best wishes to you all, thank you for your continued support and welcome to new members.

Take care

Richard

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Newsletter Editor – Ann Kitchen 

Breaking News

- It is with great sadness that I announce that the Start Speaking Welsh group is now finishing. I know we all want to thank Frances and Rosemond for all their hard work in running this group. The commitment of twice a month was a tough one and I know many members appreciated everything they did in promoting the Welsh Language. Diolch o galon.
- Thank you to all Group Leaders who have already sent in you attendance sheets for my annual audit. It's interesting to see groups flourishing and perhaps some of the smaller groups either needing extra support or in some cases extremely protective of their existence. Don't forget new attendance sheets are always available at the monthly meetings or by email.

- Unfortunately if groups become too small it is not financially feasible for them to continue as we need to ensure that we value your membership fees.
- This newsletter goes out monthly (no not the same one!) and without all the contributions from our Group Leaders it would not be possible. Therefore a huge thank you to all of them for their hard work in both running their group and sending reports to the Newsletter. It is also available on line promoting our u3a.
- A reminder if you are attending the larger groups such as history or the Monthly Meeting it's important to register at the door when you arrive.
- We all look forward to the art exhibition from our Art Group under the guidance of Chris. Keep reading and get your diaries out. There is such talent in this group.
- Several have shown interest in the talk by Brother Andy from Skanda Vale which Andrew has organised. Read the final arrangements under the World Faith Section of this Newsletter. This talk is open to everyone not only World Faith group members and it's still not too late if you wish to attend. Please contact me on ann@carmarthenu3a.org.uk.
- Check out the Digital Group section, exciting prospects ahead.
- As advertised in previous newsletters Peter has been organising a First Aid course.

  The course will be on 1st October for up to 20 members at the St John's Ambulance premises in Barn Road adjacent to John Street car park with attendees receiving a certificate. It will be led by Sean Llewellyn-Betts, deputy division manager for Carmarthen St John's Ambulance. There is disabled access from the Barn Road entrance. Still places available! Not too late to join.

  The course will be free as the committee has agreed to make a donation. However members can further contribute on the day if interested in doing so!

  It will be an all-day affair starting at 9.30 – 12.30 with a lunch break followed by the afternoon session from 1:30 to 4:00. The content will include the following topics:

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

  There will be plenty of time for discussion and practical exercises. If you are interested please contact Peter peter@carmarthenu3a.org.uk.
- Harold has organised a Safeguarding course for Group Leaders and organisers as run by CAVS. Please get back to him as soon as possible if you are interested in attending. Spaces are limited. Please contact harold@carmarthenu3a.org.uk.
- The photographers this month are Suzanne, Sheila, Eleanor, Mike and Juliet.

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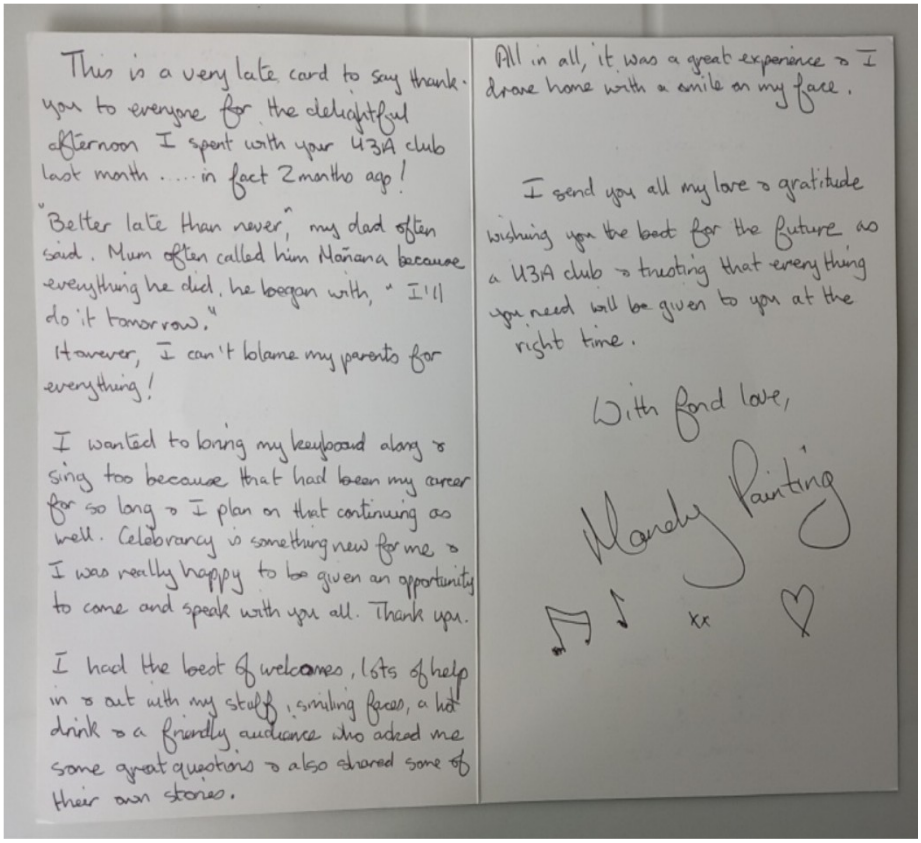


Monthly Meeting Presentations – Eleanor Baird



Eleanor has received this thank you card from Mandy Painting the Singing Celebrant in July.

Come and read it at the next monthly meeting.



This is a very late card to say thank you to everyone for the delightful afternoon I spent with your U3A club last month ..... in fact 2 months ago!

"Better late than never", my dad often said. Mum often called him Mañana because everything he did, he began with, "I'll do it tomorrow."

However, I can't blame my parents for everything!

I wanted to bring my keyboard along & sing too because that had been my career for so long & I plan on that continuing as well. Celebrancy is something new for me & I was really happy to be given an opportunity to come and speak with you all. Thank you.

I had the best of welcomes, lots of help in & out with my stuff, smiling faces, a hot drink & a friendly audience who asked me some great questions & also shared some of their own stories.

All in all, it was a great experience & I drove home with a smile on my face.

I send you all my love & gratitude wishing you the best for the future as a U3A club & trusting that everything you need will be given to you at the right time.

With fond love,

Mandy Painting

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I'm sure we are all grateful for all the hard work that Eleanor does in finding us such excellent speakers. A little thank goes a long way. Well done you Eleanor.

The September speaker will be Nick Thomas, Education & Events Co-ordinator at Environmental Transfer Operation (ETO). He will tell us about the importance of recycling and the new scheme to be rolled out across the county this autumn.

The October speaker will be Elliot Jones, the Engagement Officer for Warm Wales with a talk entitled "Healthy homes, healthy people".

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It's that time again for this year's Christmas Lunch to be arranged.

Would you be interested in helping to organise it.

If so please let Richard know
chair@carmarthenu3a.org.uk

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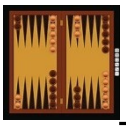
Treasurer/Membership Report – Eric Kitchen 

Over the past few months the committee has been updating a number of policies, which can now be seen on our website, one of which is the Finance Policy – have a look!

You may recall last year on your behalf I was able to claim nearly £500 in Gift Aid from HMRC to swell our coffers. In a few weeks time I shall be completing this year's form for those members who have agreed for me to do this. However I need to confirm the information I have remains correct. I will therefore be emailing members to check that information and if incorrect please let me have the update.

Regarding membership, over the past month there have been a number of enquiries with the prospect of 5 or 6 new members joining, Susan is one – welcome Susan. She and some others may attend a taster session or two, if you come across them make them feel welcome.

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Back gammon – Kate Waldron

Although we were small in number this month, we still enjoyed the twists and turns of the games, never quite knowing how they will end. Good to see that there are new U3A members and we hope some of them will come along next month, even if just out of curiosity if they haven't played before.

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Knitting and Nattering – Ann Kitchen 

The knitting group were extremely busy earlier this year knitting for the work that Dr Hilary Lewis does with children out in Uganda. Unfortunately the Ebola outbreak prevented her from delivering all the baby clothes that have been knitted when she had intended. If all goes well hopefully the clothes will be handed over this week as Dr Hilary is now departing early October. Thank you to all our knitters for their contributions.

I shall have more information about this in the next newsletter.

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Book Club – Ann Kitchen

We appear to be all out of sync with the Book Group reports. That is what happens when I disappear for a month, I lose all track of time!!

At the September meeting we discussed Pat's choice, 'Absolutely & Forever' by Rose Tremain. A period book based in the 1950s. The discussion soon moved on to our experiences of growing up in the 50s and 60s. I think we all concluded how life has changed for the youngsters of today.

At this meeting we were pleased to welcome two new faces and hopefully they will return.

In September we shall be reading 'The Keeper of Lost Things' by Ruth Hogan chosen by Lyn.

The October book chosen by Sue is 'The List of Suspicious Things' by Jennie Godfrey – 'Miv is convinced that her dad wants to move their family Down South because of the Murders.' I'm intrigued already.

Come and join us. We always welcome new members.

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Philosophy Group – Chas Griffin

Flossy!!

We looked at the tradition that Jesus visited India, apparently well-supported by Hindu and Buddhist texts. Might this explain why the Indian religions and philosophies chime so well with the deepest essential Christian message?

Then we looked at the mysterious word 'Logos', usually translated as 'the Word', and noted that it has several other meanings, including 'principle of creation', thus aligning it neatly with the Hindu 'Brahman' and the Chinese 'Dao'.

It really does look as though all the Big Religions have far more in common, deep down, than the war-mongering Managements would have us believe. Perhaps full ecumenism will occur one day, to the benefit of all!

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Coffee Morning – Chris Driver

Come and meet and chat with existing and new u3a members. This is a warm, welcoming group. Attendance averages 16-20. The Ivy Bush is always welcoming, the only requirement is to buy a drink and enjoy the company.

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Sunday Lunch Group – Chris Woodward.

When I was away Chris messaged to say they had 28 members at the last Sunday Lunch group. Is that a record achievement? Well done and thank you Chris for your organising.

The next Sunday Lunch is booked for Sunday 4th October at 1:00 pm at Llety Cynin. The room we have booked holds a maximum of 24 people. They can accommodate more, however, these would be seated in an adjoining room. I appreciate for some members a quieter room may appeal so I will not limit the numbers attending.

If you would like to come along and are not on the list above can you please let me know **before Monday 28th September**. I need to confirm the numbers on the Monday. No bookings will be accepted after this date. chrisw@carmarthenu3a.org.uk. Thank You.

Diary dates:

8th November – The Falcon Lammas Street, Carmarthen at 1:00 pm – we will need to pre-order. Details to follow in the Newsletter.

6th December – The Quins Rugby Club in Carmarthen at 1:00 pm – carvery so choose on the day. Details to follow in the Newsletter.

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Coffi a Chlonc – Peter Loughran

In September, in spite of my urgings in the newsletter we only had a handful of members in Coffi a Chlonc. However, we were an enthusiastic bunch and we enjoyed our discussion. Plenty of topics came up naturally in our conversation e.g. the recent Eisteddfod, a visit last week to Llanllwch church, historic buildings in the town, excavations in parts of the old Roman town and the artefacts that turned up, the joys of buying and selling a house and indeed the future of the group.

In spite of my misgivings, I was encouraged to keep the group going and not give up too soon! But we would appreciate some new members and perhaps some 'graduates' from the 'start speaking Welsh' group. We are 'a broad church' and can provide a linguistic home for all and sundry! In Welsh of course!

Do join us next time in the Ivy Bush on Tuesday 20th of October at 2:00 pm. Croeso cynnes iawn i bawb!

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Tea rota for the next 3 monthly meetings



September	World Faiths
	Park Walkers
October	History
November	

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Short Mat Bowls – Eric Kitchen 

In my absence I was grateful to Richard for leading the group this last month.

Richard reports that they had a very successful session with 5 members present with 6 having sent apologies for one reason or another. Two new members, Colin and Angela, declared that they had never played before. When one or other of them won several ends the rest of us began to wonder whether they were being economical with the truth or were having beginner's luck.

This is an elite group but some months it's can be even more elite as numbers can drop. With this in mind when asked to confirm your intention or not to attend please respond as it may be necessary to cancel that month's session.

If like Colin and Angela you would like to join us let me know (eric@carmarthenu3a.org.uk).





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Exploring World Faiths – Andrew Padfield

The September meeting looked at the life of Mohammed. He was born about 570 CE. He was raised by his grandfather and, later, adopted by his uncle, a businessman who organised camel trains. Mohammed joined his uncle`s business and, apparently, did well. His reputation brought him to the attention of a wealthy window who engaged him as her manager. He also did well and later married her.

At this time Mecca was already the centre of worship of the black stone, or Kabaala, probably a meteorite. Mohammed was disgusted by the exploitation of pilgrims. At about the age of 40 he began to have visions accompanied by voices. These lasted for about 2o years. Initially, he told no one about these visions but later told his wife and brother-in-law. They encouraged him to tell others. Mohammed then began preaching but his message was not well received by his tribe though it was by pilgrims and the poor. He was forced to flee. Several years later people who were disaffected by what was happening in Mecca joined him and 10 years later helped him return to Mecca in triumph. He died in 632 CE.

Mohammed did not intend to start a new religion. There is no doubt he was strongly influenced by Judaism and Christianity. He believed that what had started with Jesus he was continuing. After his death, Islam expanded mainly due to conquests by the tribal confederation Mohammed had started.

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The talk about Skanda Vale by Brother Andy will be on Monday 5th October. It will start at 2:00 pm and, allowing for questions, be over by 3:15 pm. The venue for the talk will be
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Christchurch church hall. (That is the door opposite The Quins not the main church door). Don't forget this is open to all members not just this group.

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Art Group – Chris Driver

We continue to enjoy our fortnightly meetings and have welcomed several new members over the past months. Currently there is an even balance betweem Cartref Cynnes residence and u3a memnbers. Currently I have a healthy informal waiting list. Several members have fine art credentials, even so we also welcome all abilities.

Cartref Cynnes have been incredibly supportive over the past 10 years all at no cost to the u3a. We thank them.

The forthcoming exhibition organisation proceeds apace. The show will run for several days from 15th October. The venue is the lounge/restaurat at Cartref Cynnes. Reasonably priced drinks are available while the restaurant is open.

I know Chris and her team will appreciate your visit and you definitely wont be disappointed. Thank you to all in advance.

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Discussion Group – Peter Loughran

In September we had an interesting discussion on the subject of 'Jaw, Jaw, not War War' i.e. the need to talk rather than reach for the bomb and the bullet as a way of resolving conflicts between 'nations'. The lessons of history are mixed: sometimes diplomacy triumphs over military might but often peace comes after the 'failure' of conflict.

In October we will discuss the subject of AI which has been very much in the news recently. Some of the sub-topics may include:

- Is AI a force for good in the world or is it an evil genius that may strike at the heart of our civilisation?
- Should we be alarmed by warnings from the leaders of 'big tech' companies who are calling for increased control and government intervention?
- What are the positive effects and benefits of AI?
- What are the negative and worrying effects of AI?
- Consider some of the benefits in terms of education, science and technology, medicine, surgery, navigation, employment, the arts and so many other related areas.
- And some of the dangerous developments in warfare, cyber crime, virus production, social media etc

- Do we have the national and international mechanisms for controlling AI and whose responsibility is it anyway?
- Can we pull the plug on Ai if it seems to be getting out of control ie 'a killer switch'
- Do we look forward to our world in which AI plays an increasing part? And what of future generations?
- Where can we use AI in a positive way in u3a and in our own lives?

Plenty to get us excited at our next discussion group on 14th October at 2:00 pm at the Mount in Queen Street. Do join us if you can.

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Digital Group – Margaret Nolan

The October digital meeting is at 2:00 pm on Monday 19th October at the Learning Centre. Any u3a member (or potential member) who has any computer problems or queries is welcome. It is a drop in session but there will be a discussion on computer related topic(s).

Don't forget to bring your phone, iPad, laptop etc. You can also suggest any future topics.

Thank you Margaret. It's good to see our Digital Group is thriving.

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Garden Group – Kathie Wareham (Coordinator)

We are coming to the end of the Garden Visits for 2026. I would like to say a big thank you to the Garden Leaders this year who have done us proud with diverse gardens and made my job easy!

I would welcome garden leaders from this year to hopefully volunteer for next year and anyone else who would like to be a garden leader would be most welcome.

Happy Gardening,

Kathie.

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Suzanne organised the August garden visit.

Nineteen of us went to Treffgarne Hall and enjoyed an introductory talk by Martin about the history of the house and garden followed by delicious cakes and tea served by Jackie in her kitchen.
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Thank you Suzanne, that looks like another fascinating garden visit.

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Walking Group – Eric Kitchen (Coordinator)

September Kidwelly Quay Walk: Mike Woodward

There were 12 attendees; the weather was cloudy with a couple of light showers. We started from Parc Stephens in Kidwelly walking through the sports fields and onto the road. We then crossed over the old railway line and onto the Wales Coastal Path which runs alongside the partly restored Kymer Canal (built in 1768) and then to Kidwelly Quay back to Parc Stephens.

This was about 3 miles long. We had lunch at the Kidwelly Deli which everyone enjoyed.

Thank you Mike for the leading the walk and for anyone interested there is a portrait of Kymer in Newton House on the Dinefwr estate. He was a prominent figure in Welsh industrial history.

The Kymer's Canal is recognised as the first canal built in Wales.



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October Lawrenny Walk: Andrew Padfield

Please note the walk will be on 30th October, 1 week later than usual.

The walk will be approximately 3.25 on roads, woodland and fields. Parking is at Lawrenny Quay by the Yacht Station where the walk will start.

Directions to Lawrenny are: A484, A40 (to Canason Bridge roundabout), turn left onto the A4075 to Cresselly. Turn right at Cresselly and follow signs for Lawrenny (signs may also say Cresselly Quay). Cresselly to Lawrenny is about 2.5 miles.

The AA say it is 29 miles and to allow 40 minutes for the journey. Car sharing is a good idea.

Further details on lunch venue to follow.

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History Group – Judith Holland

The History talk for October will be on the 21st given by Dr James January McCann of the Royal
Commission (RCAHMW).

He will be talking about Welsh place names.

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At the History Group meeting on 16th August local historian Bruce Wallace gave a talk on General Picton and the Waterloo Frieze.

General Picton was born in 1758 and grew up in Haverfordwest. At 20 he joined the 12th Regiment of Foot. He was stationed for a while on Gibraltar, and moved to other regiments rising through the ranks to Lieutenant Colonel. He took a break from soldiering of 12 years.

In 1797 when Britain took over Trinidad from the Spanish, he was appointed Governor General. Trinidad was in turmoil when he arrived and the country continued to be ruled by Spanish law. Picton on his return to the UK was tried for cruelty and torture in 1806. He was initially found guilty but it was repealed, when he claimed that he was following orders to rule by Spanish law and this is what he had done. He said he had merely signed the paperwork handed to him by the magistrate.

He returned to soldiering in the Peninsular War and had a number of successful battles and rose to the rank of General. At Waterloo in 1815 he served under Wellington, and was killed on the battlefield.

As a onetime MP and local hero, the people of Carmarthen raised a substantial sum to build a monument to Picton. The monument was designed by John Nash, and was a great deal more elaborate than the one we see today. It had several tiers, with canon on one level and
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a statue of Picton on the top. The story of his famous battles was included on four plaques around the base of the statue. These were fairly rough depictions.

However, the monument was poorly executed and crumbled away and within 20 years or so had collapsed. A new committee set out to fund raise to replace the monument. J Fowler was commissioned as the architect. A frieze of the battle of Waterloo was commissioned, but when the obelisk was built, there were insufficient funds to produce a frieze for each of the four sides. Consequently, the frieze was left in the fields to gather moss. It was later moved to a farm nearby, and then to form the back wall of the garden behind Woodbine Cottage. Bruce told us that he had discovered the frieze when he moved into Woodbine Cottage in 1974, when he was clearing the garden. The frieze was carefully removed and restored by the Antiquarians and moved to the County Museum in Abergwili, where it may be seen today.

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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

October 2026 Group Activities

1st	09:30	Thursday	First Aid course	St John's Ambulance	peter@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
1st	14:00	Thursday	Literature	Ivy Bush	pthacker@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
2nd	14:00	Friday	Scrabble	Library	angela@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
4th	13;00	Sunday	Sunday Lunch	Llety Cynin	chrisw@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
5th	10:30	Monday	Coffee Morning	Ivy Bush	chris@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
5th	14:00	Monday	Skanda Vale talk	Christchurch Hall	andrew@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
6th	10:00	Tuesday	The Park Walkers	Velodrome	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
8th	13:45	Thursday	Short Mat Bowls	Bancyfelin Hall	richard@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
12th	14:00	Monday	Knitting & Nattering	Ivy Bush	ann@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
13th	10:00	Tuesday	The Park Walkers	Velodrome	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
13th	14:00	Tuesday	Poetry	The Mount (CAVS)	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
13th	14:00	Tuesday	Philosophy	The Mount (CAVS)	chas@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
14th	09:30	Wednesday	Art	Cartref Cynnes	chris@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
14th	10:30	Wednesday	Backgammon	Library	kate@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
14th	14:00	Wednesday	Discussion	The Mount (CAVS)	peter@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
15th		Thursday	Art group exhibition	Cartref Cynnes	chris@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
16th		Friday	Art group exhibition	Cartref Cynnes	chris@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
19th	11:00	Monday	10 pin bowling	Excel Bowling Club	ann@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
19th	14:00	Monday	Digital	Learning Centre	margaret@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
19th	14:00	Monday	Book Club	Ivy Bush	ann@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
20th	10:00	Tuesday	The Park Walkers	Velodrome	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
20th	14:30	Tuesday	Coffi a Chlonc	Ivy Bush	peter@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
21st	14:00	Wednesday	History	Bowling Club	judith@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
26th	10:00	Monday	Committee	CAVS	secretary@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
27th	10:00	Tuesday	The Park Walkers	Velodrome	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
27th	14:00	Tuesday	Philosophy	The Mount (CAVS)	chas@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
28th	09:30	Wednesday	Art	Cartref Cynnes	chris@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
28th	14:30	Wednesday	Listening to Music	The Mount (CAVS)	richard@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
29th	14:00	Thursday	Monthly Meeting	Bowling Club	richard@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
30th	10:30	Friday	Walking	Lawrenny	eric@carmarthenu3a.org.uk

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