



GILWERN u3a NEWSLETTER

THE UNSOCIAL TIMES

Issue 19: June 2021

Dear Member,
Hello All

Greetings on a very wet and windy day. Roll on summer when we can enjoy being outdoors. I hope you continue to enjoy our monthly newsletter. As always, a very big “thank you” to all who send in contributions, please keep them coming.

Following Rae’s reminder on membership fees last month I am delighted to say that we now have 71 fully paid up members. It is wonderful to see how many of you have continued in membership, even in these difficult times. If you know of anyone who would like to join our group please pass on the relevant information. Membership forms can be obtained from the library or our web site.

You will have received the information regarding our AGM which is to be held on June 16th. We are always keen to welcome new blood onto the committee. If you feel you would like to play a more active role in the life of Gilwern u3a please send in your nomination. Following the AGM we will hold our regular monthly meeting when Mr Dean Powell will be entertaining and enlightening us with his talk “Land of Song”. We look forward to seeing you.

We have received several suggestions for new groups: craft, calligraphy, bird -watching, and flora and fauna, calligraphy, and craftwork. If you have a keen interest in any of these activities and would be interested in leading a group please get in touch.

Best wishes
Karen

Memorial to our old 'Posty', Andrew

As I walked up the hill to Gilwern today, 13 May 21, I noticed a slender tree in the centre of the Lower Common, near the Community Centre. It looks very obvious and clear in the middle of the Common. Half an hour later I learnt from one of our members that this new oak tree is there to commemorate our wonderful old postman, Andrew. He was so well known by all, and he was brilliant at remembering our names and making remarks to brighten our days. Let's hope that this splendid oak develops fast and lives for hundreds of years.



You may be interested to know that a large part of the Common is given over to flowering and seeding for the encouragement of wildlife etc for the present.

Wild flower area on Lower Common



Hugging Guidelines

- Lynda O'K

I've previously commented on the evolution of COVID tribes, and this week I came across another two. Huggers, who throw themselves in with abandon to demonstrate their happiness or excitement, and non-huggers who shy away at the mere thought of embracing another human being. With the easing of COVID restrictions, we will now be legally able to hug for the first time since locking down. It is assumed that ordinary people will not be able to decide for themselves whether they want to hug or not, so there are now new Government guidelines for those who are not sure! I think the benefits outweigh the risks, and a gentle hug can convey much more than words. Hugging can release stress and anxiety and increase bonding between people if only for a few seconds. There are reportedly many health benefits, and the recommended daily hug count is the same as for fruit and veg intake, 5 a day. So, depending on your hugging preference, please refer to the BBC website [Covid: Tips on hugging safely - BBC News](#) for lessons on how to make sure you are doing it right. I'm not sure if they are giving marks out of ten!

HOUSEBOUND HUGS No 19

- Kay B

Our feline friends

Let me say straight away, I'm an animal lover and would never harm any living creature. But I'm also a keen gardener, and this time of year I'm fighting a war with one of our neighbour's cats. I prepared neatly raked seed beds, sowed seeds of various types, only to discover that overnight a cat had used the ground as its toilet. So I removed the poo and tidied up the hole left and covered the area with wire netting.

Two nights later, the cat had moved onto the rhubarb area, piling soil on top of the newly shooting leaves – more wire netting. The final straw was when my husband finished sowing his vegetable seeds in his new easy-reach VegTrug. This smart piece of equipment has a cover for protection from overnight frost which we opened slightly during the daytime. We had only gone out for a couple of hours and that cat had jumped up and discovered a new high-level toilet – we were absolutely furious. We now have a mixture of beetroot and carrots growing in the same row. I researched other people's solutions to cats in gardens, and while I was on-line, the culprit wandered past the window and looked in. He's a beautiful, long-haired grey cat called Bertie, who has no qualms at using any part of our garden he fancies, usually gazing towards us while he does what he needs to do.

One solution, I read, is to scatter chopped up skins of citrus fruits, so our seed beds are now covered with pieces of lemon and grapefruit rind. This seemed to work, for a time, but it wasn't a total answer. Now we've got pellets which we ordered on-line, and these are scattered while wearing the supplied gloves, because they are treated with urine from lions! The idea is that when scented, local cats assume there's a much bigger cat somewhere near and keep clear. So far, so good, as at least things are growing much bigger, and Bertie is not so much of a threat.



Mouse at play!

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Mike J

The Committee

(Poem found in an old folder)

Oh, give me pity, I'm on a committee.
Which means that from morning to night
We attend and amend, and contend and defend,
Without a conclusion in sight.

We confer and refer, we defer and demur,
And reiterate all of our thoughts,
We revise the agenda with frequent addenda
And consider a load of reports.

We compose and propose, we support and oppose,
And the points of procedure are fun;
But although various notions are brought up as motions
There's terribly little gets done.

We resolve and absolve, but we never dissolve,
Since it's out of the question for us –
What a shattering pity to end our committee –
Where else could we make such a fuss?

Kay B

**Finally! We can get
out, meet our friends
and socialize!**



Is this a Committee on Zoom?!

The new Monk

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Kay B

A new young monk arrives at the monastery. He is engaged to help the other monks in copying the old canons and laws of the Church by hand. He notices, however, that all the monks are copying from copies and not from the original.

So the new monk goes to the Abbot to question this, pointing out that if someone made even a small error in the first copy, it would never be picked up. In fact, the error would be continued in all of the subsequent copies.

The Abbot says "We have been copying from the copies for centuries, but you make a good point, my son."

So the Abbot goes down into the dark caves underneath the monastery where the original manuscripts are held in a locked vault that hasn't been opened for hundreds of years. Hours go by and nobody sees the Abbot.

The young monk gets worried and goes downstairs to look for him. He sees the old Abbot banging his head against the stone wall. His forehead is bleeding and bruised and he is crying uncontrollably.

The young monk asks the old Abbot "What's wrong, father?" With a choking voice the old Abbot replies, "The word is 'celebrate'...."

Care taken at Art Session

The first art session meeting together was held in the Community Centre on Tuesday 18 May, and excellent arrangements were made for the six attending to be well spaced out with windows and door open.



Art Challenge for June

The topic for the month is TROPICANA. Have a go!

Mask waste

Lynda O'K

It's strange how things evolve. The wearing of facemasks has become the "norm", and statistics show that as well as helping to prevent the spread of COVID 19, it has also reduced the transmission of colds and flu that affect many of us during the winter months. A benefit to us all, you would think. However, when out and about over recent weeks as lockdown eases, I've noticed that on almost every street corner or pathway, there are discarded disposable face masks of the blue and white variety, adding to the tons of litter already plaguing our countryside. These disposable masks contain plastic.

We have been conditioned to dispose of our waste carefully, and we were slowly starting to reduce plastic pollution, but it seems to have gone pear shaped because of the global pandemic. The blight of facemasks is new, keeping humans safe, but becoming a hazard to wildlife.

Recently it was reported that divers in the Philippines found that coral reefs were covered in used and discarded face masks damaging the reef as well as the marine life that feeds off it. Also, many birds have been caught up in masks and had to be rescued and released.

When disposing of plastic ring tag holders, we all know that we should cut the rings before throwing them away so that animals will not get caught in them. The message is the same for facemasks, and we are encouraged to cut the elastic ear straps before discarding and disposing of masks safely. Also, we are encouraged to switch to reusable masks instead of disposable.



Marlborough Street Part 2

Harriet H

Last month we heard of the flamboyant magistrate, St John Harmsworth who was given to excellent lunches at his club and could not be said to be fully alert during afternoon trials. He was also erratic and would take against a particular crime or the information he had about the person and would send them off to the Crown court for a heavier sentence than he could impose. We all suspected him of failing to read our reports properly and learnt to make sure that the last line covered the sentence we felt should be imposed. Fatal to put 'he is not suitable for community service' since there was a danger that only the last two words would spring out to him and such an order would be made at once. An absence of a recommendation in a report made him really cross and he would ask plaintively 'Mrs Hall, what shall I do?'

In contrast, his colleague Mr Jeremy Connor, went through reports with a fine-tooth comb and we were careful to know what was in each one we gave him before the court started. He was a bright, fast-talking man much given to asking us to interview people to gather immediate information and telling them his conclusions with bewildering detail so that we would have to go and explain to offenders what he had said to them. They were both men concerned with the difficulties humans got themselves into and I mourn the tolerance of Marlborough Street.

Gilwern u3a intends having new groups

Expressions of interest in the formation of new groups have come from a number of members. They include Bird Watching / Bird calls, Calligraphy, Craftwork – sharing skills, and Yoga. Perhaps there are others, but volunteer leaders are needed. It's a satisfying task to lead a group, seeking ideas from the group members, and a modest amount of administration. The Committee hopes that members will come forward to lead groups and enjoy playing a positive role in our u3a.

How long will the Newsletter continue?

A view taken at a recent meeting is that July, Number 20, should be the last. The original idea was to have some communication when we were all in lockdown. We owe much to the many who wrote a wonderful variety of articles. If anyone is missing an issue and would like one emailed to them, please contact davidnhall@hotmail.com
Let's make the last one, No 20 a really good final one!

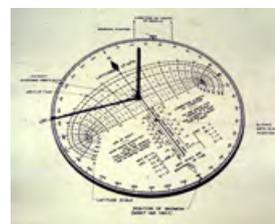
I want sun and stars

David N H

You might not want to, but you can find your way across miles and miles of desert by navigating using a simple sun compass. It's totally unnecessary to have one in the UK! In any case one has navigation in the car by satellites along with accurate maps, but a sun compass used to be a priceless way of navigating in deserts.

The sun compass, developed in the first half of the last century by Dr Ball in Egypt, is little more than a garden sun dial. When installing one in your garden you set it facing north and the time can be read. With the sun compass you set the time on it and merely turn the dial to the desired angle of travel. The compass has a little more on its face than a sun dial, taking account of latitude, and month of the year and local time.

In those early days, instead of using satellites to tell you where on the earth's surface you are, you used the stars, just as sailors used them with a sextant. We used a theodolite, chronometer and tables, taking the angle of the star, and exact time of three or four stars. Your position on the world's surface could be told with a reasonable degree of accuracy. Most satisfying! The following morning the compass course could be set to take account of the previous day's travel, perhaps across a hundred miles of flat desert.



Facebook page for Gilwern u3a urgently needed

Are you good at using Facebook? Would you be willing to run a page for Gilwern u3a? Please contact David on davidnhall@hotmail.com. The Art Group has a very good page for the group being run by its leader, Lynda O'Keefe.

The Family History Group

A recent picture of the group taken after they had been hard at work.



Art Challenge for May

The subject was "a building", and the honour goes to Tony with his scene of St David's. The judge's comments were: "Tony's picture of St Davids Cathedral sits well in the landscape of this picture. The lines of earth and hedge draw the eye to the building as do the two figures. Shading is crisp and adds perspective. The hills behind remind us where this building is situated. Capturing the brief well here Tony! More lovely pictures from everyone. This month I choose Tony's as my choice. I love the figure in the foreground and the architectural lines of the buildings in this picture. Well done!"

