



GILWERN
Live, laugh, enjoy

u3a



Hilary Lipscombe **A Celebration of her contribution to Gilwern u3a**

Hilary will be remembered as the Founder of Gilwern u3a. Ten years ago she had a great idea, shared it, pursued it, encouraged us all, and reached the goal. Following her passing, some of our founder members have recalled those early days:-

Kay Blackwell recalls:-

“It was early Spring in 2016, over a cup of tea, when Hilary asked if I was interested in joining with her to start a u3a group in Gilwern. I had friends who were in either the Abergavenny or Crickhowell groups, and so immediately gave her my enthusiastic support and help in rustling up local members for this new venture. Over the next few months, lots of networking went on between friends, and friends of friends, so that after the summer holidays, a pre-launch meeting was arranged for 17 September 2016 in the Community Centre. My husband and I had lived in the area over 30 years by then, but I was amazed to discover just how few people I knew at that first well-attended meeting and it made me realise that Gilwern is a very spread-out community. From that meeting, a Steering Committee was formed with Hilary as Chair and meetings were held round the large dining table in her home at The Old Rectory in Maesygartha. It was Hilary who liaised with u3a Headquarters in London and who ploughed through the mountains of paperwork involved in setting up a new branch of u3a. It was Hilary who guided us all on the Committee into ensuring the Constitution was how we wanted it. It was Hilary who identified possible funding opportunities and successfully achieved them. In short, it is unlikely that Gilwern u3a would exist or be as successful as it is without the contribution of time and effort put in by Hilary Lipscombe. We are fortunate to have had Hilary in our midst.”

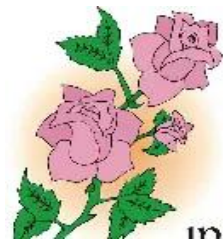
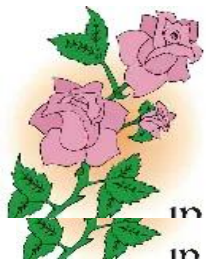
Linda Swanson recalls:-

“When Hilary shared her idea of setting up Gilwern u3a, I immediately knew it was something special. Her enthusiasm was infectious. Knowing of my interest in family history, she encouraged me to start the Family History Group, and I was delighted when she became one of our very first members. Hilary’s research skills were excellent, and she contributed enormously to our three main projects: WW1, Oral Histories, and Living Stones.

Like so many others, I still find it hard to put into words the shock and sadness of losing Hilary. I’ve always found her to be reliably kind, generous with her time, and ready to help others. She leaves behind a wonderful legacy in the community she helped to build and she will be greatly missed.”

Graham Nelmes recalls:-

“I first met Hilary in the Corn Exchange after Kay Blackwell persuaded me to go to a meeting to set up a Gilwern u3a. Hilary was a giant bundle of enthusiasm and we all set out on our adventure which has lasted until now. Hilary took on virtually every role within the organisation at one time or another. She always carried them out with great expertise and an unflinching willingness. Over the years, in order to attend Network meetings, we travelled all over Wales with me as the chirping passenger and she the patient driver. The last time I saw her was before Christmas, she seemed as enthused with life as ever, so shock is all I can express at her sudden passing. Gilwern u3a will not be the same without her.”



Lynda Somme-Dew recalls:-

“Hilary was a kind, considerate friend of mine for many years. I’m still in shock that she is not here and miss her dreadfully. When she told me about her idea for Gilwern u3a, and after the initial meeting in the community centre, I volunteered to help start it up. We met at her house and I landed up as Secretary. Hilary was always there to lend support, come up with ideas, make suggestions and guide us. She was a great friend to all of us.”

Karen Harris recalls:-

“Hilary was instrumental in the establishment of Gilwern u3a, without her there would not be a u3a here in Gilwern. She initially contacted u3a headquarters to ask why there wasn’t a group in Gilwern given that there was one in both Abergavenny and Crickhowell. She was told to set one up, so she immediately set to and did it! She organised an initial meeting and from there a committee was established and Gilwern u3a was up and running. Hilary’s actions exemplified her motivation, dynamism and vitality, if a thing needed doing Hilary would do it. She had unbounded energy and enthusiasm and a zest for life. She was always extremely loyal, thoughtful and encouraging of others. She also had wonderful powers of persuasion, you couldn’t say no to Hilary for long. I count myself very fortunate to have known Hilary not just as a fellow member of Gilwern u3a, but also as friend. She was great company and had a wonderful sense of humour. I still cannot quite believe that she is no longer with us. She has left a lasting legacy and will be sorely missed.”

It is clear that Hilary’s tireless and valuable input has helped keep our u3a running, developing and growing. She always played a vital role. Most recently, as a committee member and Groups Coordinator, Hilary provided reliable and enthusiastic support to our Group Leaders. This has enabled the evolution of a wide variety of Groups, appealing to a diverse range of interests. At the same time, she led the Social Bridge Group, making new members very welcome, reassuring those new to the game and making the social aspect a key priority. Hilary was also an enthusiastic member of the Garden Group and the Birdwatching group. Gilwern u3a will not be the same without her as she has always been at the heart of it. She set an impressive example, and we will all miss her. Hilary has left us with a hard act to follow, but we will try.

We have Hilary to thank for Gilwern u3a.

