

THE REVIEW – Spring 2026

Llandudno Area u3a



Open Meeting, 7 April 2026

Ingrid Lewis (pictured above) will present *Exploring the Arctic with the Ocean Warrior Foundation Expedition* at Craig y Don Community Centre, 2 to 4pm Admission is free.

[More details...](#)

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Talk: Exploring the Arctic with the Ocean Warrior Foundation Expedition by *Ingrid Lewis*

My journey to the Arctic was transformative in more ways than anyone can imagine. Coming very soon after the death of my husband, it gave me a sense of purpose and pride. It gave me joy and hope. To be part, albeit a very small part, of this immense undertaking to collect climate change data for NASA, ESA and other luminaries was an incredible privilege.

To sail on Europe's largest wooden tall ship, The Linden; to be part of the crew; to climb the rigging; to undertake polar plunges and the hikes across moraine; to witness the calving of glaciers are the kind of experiences dreams are made of. Then of course, there were the whales, dolphins, arctic foxes; the ptarmigan and other sea birds; and the ubiquitous polar bear.

Supported by key luminaries Sir Ranulph Fiennes, Alexandra Shackleton, Sir Chris Bonington and others, Ocean Warrior aims

to provide and share climate data to the world in real time. I will treasure my very small role in supporting this goal.

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In Memory of Angela Middleton

A dedication from our Chair Ann Davidson



It is with great sadness I have to report the death of one of our Founder Members. Angela Middleton was a driving force behind the setting up of our u3a, more than a decade ago. Along with her husband David, Angela served on our Committee in various roles including Speaker Secretary and Refreshments Secretary, with David taking on the Role of Groups Coordinator.

Angela remained Group Leader of one of our inaugural groups, studying Genealogy for over 12 years with the first meetings held at Angela's home. As the Group grew in popularity it soon had to relocate to a larger venue, the Community Room at

Llandudno Library, which was home to the group of 10 to 12 members up until Covid struck.

Angela's natural talent and positive and supportive nature were reflected in all she did, advising her Group members and even at times completing family histories free of charge for those who didn't have a computer or the necessary IT skills. Although totally self-taught, she even produced an Information Sheet for those wishing to explore further - the sheet also carrying a warning of finding skeletons in the cupboard! Angela remained Group Leader until the Spring of 2025, when Steve Jordan joined to help the Group.

From her teenage years, Angela was an active member of the Christian Church, something she and David shared throughout their lives together. Brought up in Leeds and leaving the local Comprehensive School at 15, Angela and her cousin sat the entrance exam for the local Commercial College, where she studied shorthand and typing. She knew from an early age what she wanted to do, and she pursued her dream. Having qualified as a shorthand typist, Angela took up work with one of the Government Departments for Employment and became part of the typing pool. David also worked there, which is how they met. Angela and David married and have three beautiful children.

After taking time off from her career to care for the children, in the mid-80s Angela became Personal Assistant to the director at the Christian Aid Regional Office in Leicester.

In 2004 Angela and David retired to the Llandudno area, where they both became involved in our u3a. We are grateful to Angela and David for their dedication over the years and send heartfelt sympathies to the Middleton family and their friends.

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Membership Renewal

Llandudno Area u3a Membership runs from 1 April to 31 March and the 2026-27 membership fee is £12, which includes a national fee of £4.00 to the Third Age Trust. Associate membership, for those already registered with another u3a, is £8.50.

You should have received an invitation email by mid-March; if not please check your spam folder or contact the membership team via the Llandudno Area u3a website

Payment methods

For existing membership renewals, online payment is preferred. You will need your membership number, email, and postcode to log in to the u3a Member Portal at:

<https://u3abeacon.org.uk/>

Alternatively, renew in-person at monthly Open Meetings, held on the first Tuesday of each month at Craig-y-Don Community Centre, Queen's Rd, Craig-y-Don, Llandudno LL30 1TE.

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Landmark Fragment

Recognise this clock on a roof? It marks the northern end of a recently revamped landmark in our area.



[**See details...**](#)

Breaking Ground in AI - A Beginner's Perspective

Switch on the computer and go back to bed, advises u3a member Ruth Roberts.



I've simply got to share my latest 'find'. I have just been introduced to an AI search engine called *Perplexity AI* (just put that into Google and it comes up straight away). Put simply, *Perplexity* is *Google* with a brain. Teachers, researchers, indeed anyone can use it to write reports or come up with topics for discussion in language groups etc. You can even (apparently) attach e.g. a long research paper and ask it to summarise the main points. If you still don't understand the complex paper (often irksome and mind boggling) you can say so and ask *Perplexity* to make it simpler for you. So how many hours have I spent dissecting and analysing the different perspectives held by Piaget and Vygotsky or the nuances between Capitalism and Keynesianism?

Forgotten where your important quote was from? As long as the book is electronic, easy-peasy – just ask *Perplexity*. Unlike some AI search engines, *Perplexity* lists the sources. So if, for example, you want to dismiss Wikipedia (it is, after all, self-edit) as an unreliable source, just do so. If you want to check out a reliable source, simply go ahead.

Teachers can say e.g. 'write me an email to a parent to tell them nicely that their child is naughty'. *Poe AI* is another one. I am told a teacher can add an excel spreadsheet and ask Poe to use the marks in e.g. column 6/ cells number etc and incorporate it with a bit of info you provide the AI search engine with. It produces paragraphs in Welsh too. I've just started to use it when I prepare discussion topics, fillers etc for our u3a French group. It is very scary and quite astonishing. Absolument stupéfiant, on croit rêver. Époustouflant!

Alors, qu'est-ce que je peux dire de plus? All one has to do now to create reports etc is switch on the computer and go back to bed. You can even put in a rushed report and ask the AI to eg 'improve my English/ French/ German etc' and it offers good sentences that are way more sophisticated than autocorrect. I even asked *Perplexity* for a title for this short outburst. I expect my data is being harvested somewhere and I will soon be bombarded with heaven knows what, but I will cross that bridge when I come to it.

Caveat emptor. À vos risques et périls.

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Quiz from our u3a Fabulous Fashion Group

1. What do you call women's knee-length trousers that are cut with full legs to look like a skirt?
2. Who designed Kate Middleton's wedding dress?
3. Which German creative director and fashion designer died in 2019? He was associated with Chanel, Fendi and his own label.
4. What is Coco Chanel's real first name?
5. The four fashion capitals of the 20th century were considered to be Paris, London, New York and which other?

6. Who designed the apparel for the UK's 2012 Olympic teams?
7. What does the French phrase pret-a-porter mean?
8. The Kelly bag was named after which Hollywood actress?
9. Which British luxury brand has a logo featuring an equestrian knight and the Latin word prorsum?
10. Which fashion designer was shot and killed in Miami in 1997?
11. What do you call the diamond-shaped pattern often seen on socks?
12. Fashion retailer H&M was founded in which European country?
13. In 1990s which supermodel famously fell over on the catwalk while wearing Vivienne Westwood shoes?

[See Quiz Answers...](#)

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At One with Nature

Pat and Sue O'Reilly take a close look at two wonderful but often-overlooked wildflowers

When wayside and woodland plants first emerge after the long cold winter, they can all seem much of a muchness: a load of boring green leaves – that is, until their colourful flowers appear. However, there are many exceptions and this At One with Nature note is about two of them.

Our first unsung hero hails by the scientific name *Moschatellina adoxa*. Most people wouldn't give it the time of day. That's because its flowers are so easily missed. Tiny and light green, they poke their heads above the leaves on columns topped by square blocks, each surface of which sports an alluring face.

That also describes the outstanding feature of many a town hall – a tower with a large clock on each of its four faces. It will come as no surprise, therefore, that this common but rarely noticed wildflower is also known as Townhall Clock.



With four faces pointing outwards and one gazing at the sky, the flower heads of this little wayside plant are intriguing.

A mere 7mm in diameter, the individual outward-facing flowers each have five pale-green petals, while the sky-gazing flower usually has just four. Only when up close and personal can we see how intricate these flowers are. Their faint musky scent attracts small pollinating insects that fortunately don't harbour any colour prejudice. (Incidentally, that scientific name translates to 'humble, inconspicuous, musky-smelling plant'.)

Next up (or perhaps that should be down, because it is a plant of damp, shady hollows and ditch margins) is *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, commonly known as Golden Saxifrage. What's not to like in a golden-green wildflower that brightens even the dullest of early spring days? From late February through to mid-June the flowers remain open in all weathers. Interesting in having no true petals – what we see are in fact four golden-green sepals – the diminutive flowers (only 4mm across) are pollinated mainly by gnats and other small flies attracted to the nectar that Golden Saxifrage produces. What they lack in

stature, these flowers more than make up for in numbers. For example, there are more than 5000 individual flowers in the picture shown here:



Golden Saxifrage brightens roadside ditches and damp woodland edges in springtime. The tiny golden-green flowers blend into the background of pale leaves.

What it comes down to – and to see it clearly you really must also get down – is that spring isn't over until a consensus is reached on this year's fashionable shade of green. Until then, like newly leafed trees of various kinds, there's a green rainbow of wildflowers to surprise and delight those willing to get down and dirty.

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Useful information

You May be Able to Claim a Power of Attorney Refund of up to £54 per document if you registered a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) or Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA) in England and Wales between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2017. The refund, including 0.5% interest, is due to the donor. Apply online at <https://www.gov.uk/power-of-attorney-refund> or call 0300 456 0300.

Key Details for Claims:

- Eligibility: Anyone who paid to register a Power of Attorney between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2017.
- Refund Amount: Up to £54 per document, or up to £108 if both types (Health & Welfare + Finance & Property) were registered.
- Who Claims: Either the donor (person who made it) or the attorney. The money is paid back to the donor.
- Process Time: It typically takes up to 12 weeks for the claim to be processed.
- Information Needed: Donor's bank account details, and if the donor has passed away, the executor/administrator must claim.

If the donor has already passed away, the refund is paid to their estate. The online form is quick to complete, and the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) will identify all eligible fees.

For more information go to <https://www.gov.uk/power-of-attorney-refund>

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New Groups

Arabic for Beginners

To add to the success of our many language groups, Ralph Sydenham is hoping to start Arabic for Beginners. Ralph commented: “The aim of our group will be to teach members how to read and write the Arabic script reasonably fluently, and once this has been achieved we will proceed to read simple texts in classical or modern standard Arabic while at the same time acquiring basic conversational skills in the spoken dialects of the Levant and/or Egypt.”

The meetings will be held on Thursdays 10.30 a.m. to 12 noon fortnightly. For more information contact Ralph at ralsyd@aol.com. You can also register your interest via the website by going to Groups List and adding your name.

Beginners' Welsh

The new Beginners' Welsh Group is now fully subscribed. Apologies to anyone who missed out. Bob Hughes sends his thanks for the overwhelming support shown in just a few hours.

Everything Turkish

We will delve into Turkey's literature, history, culture and more. You may even be able to pick up a phrase or two to use while visiting Turkey. To register please go to the u3a Members Portal: <https://u3abeacon.org.uk/>

Craft

A new Craft Group is now available, meeting on Fridays at Craig y Don Community Centre Tennis Room from 1.30 to 4.30pm.

Adult Colouring

Some vacancies are now available in the Colouring Group on Wednesday mornings at Craig y Don Community Centre, Room 2, from 10am to 12 noon. The group will lend you books, pencils and pens while you decide what suits you best.

Stamp Collecting

This hobby has been enjoyed by many since 1840. Meeting on the third Thursday of the month at Craig y Don from 10 – 12.

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Our Medium Walkers Group on a six-mile hike taking in the Little Orme in February

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Local Landmark - Rhos Promenade's Major Makeover

Well done if you identified the clock, which is perched on the roof of the Tourism Information Point and Gift Shop on the prom at Rhos-on-Sea. Nearby, three wind-driven sculptures mark the start of a major makeover extending southwards for well over a mile towards Colwyn.



Wind-driven sculptures on Rhos Promenade

There are widened paths for pedestrians and cyclists, play areas and facilities for children (confession: the musical toys are great fun for childish adults, too - including us); new seats and benches, some with phone-charging outlets; attractive shelters, and modern lighting; and more than 50 large planters with colourful flowers, ferns, grasses and trees.



Colourful babel drums, conga drums and hand pipes - musical equipment at Rhos-on-Sea.

This regeneration project is part of a major investment in improved sea defences, funded via Welsh Government and Conwy County Borough Council. A million tonnes of sand were added to the beach, a new rock wall was built to protect the little harbour at Rhos, and West Promenade was turned into a one-way (southwards) road with extensive pay-and-display parking that includes electric vehicle chargers.

The whole project, which took two years, cost £20 million and was completed in 2024, although some fine touches are still being added.

The new prom replaces one constructed in Victorian times by the local authority with a substantial contribution from the Cayley family, who owned much of the land in the area. At that time the ground level was raised significantly, not only to improve sea defences but also to provide a promenade with more accessible public space.

As with all changes, many people love the new prom while others regret the passing of historic features and facilities. The massive rocks that now protect the sea walls certainly have an air of long-termism if not permanence. Given the median forecast of a 36cm increase in sea level in our area by 2080, future generations may be grateful for the raising of the height of the sea walls - particularly because a pessimistic forecast based on us not meeting targets for cutting CO2 emissions is that UK average sea levels may rise by more than a metre by 2100. (Currently, global CO2 emissions are still rising!)

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Tribute to Gillian Ager, by Ann Davidson



It is with great sadness that I have to announce the passing of Gillian Ager on 19th January 2026 following a prolonged period of ill health.

A founder Member as well as a Committee Member during the early days of our u3a, Gillian was very active in the organisation and enjoyed joining in with Groups such as the Compendium of Games and Eating Out.

In 2021 Gillian was made an Honorary Life Member in recognition of having completed a full six-year term on the Committee, where she fulfilled several roles in addition to participating in the Steering Group which worked to form the u3a.

I had the pleasure of meeting Gillian at the 10th Anniversary Afternoon Tea, having enjoyed numerous telephone conversations with her. I particularly remember her great sense of humour and the stories she told of the early days of our u3a.

Gillian enjoyed dancing - the photo shows her with her husband at a dance in the 1960s. In the words of Roger Boon, Gillian was a classy lady.

Sleep well Gillian, we will miss you.

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From the u3a Kitchen

Pears Poached in Red Wine Syrup



Some pears refuse to ripen, particularly at this time of year. Give them a bit of a chance and then use the stubbornly hard ones as an excuse to make this heavenly dessert!

Ingredients

1 bottle cheap dry red wine

8 small, barely ripe pears, peeled, whole with stalks left on

Pinch ground cinnamon

225 g caster sugar

teaspoon vanilla extract/essence

Method

Place the wine, sugar, cinnamon and vanilla extract in a saucepan that will also accommodate the 8 pears. Warm up and stir until the sugar has dissolved. Gently lower the pears into the wine, bring up to a gentle simmer and cover. Cook until the pears feel tender throughout when pierced with a cocktail stick.

Remove pears and cool. Reduce the red wine by about half until 'syrupy'. Pour into the dish with the pears so they can continue to marinate in the syrup. Serve warm or cold with cream or vanilla ice cream.

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Answers to the Fabulous Fashion quiz

1. Culottes
2. Sarah Burton at Alexander McQueen
3. Karl Lagerfeld
4. Gabrielle
5. Milan
6. Stella McCartney
7. Ready to Wear
8. Grace Kelly
9. Burberry
10. Versace

11. Argyle
12. Sweden
13. Naomi Campbell

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Comment/Contribute to *The Review*

Published by your Llandudno Area u3a four times a year, the Review aims to keep members informed, record events, offer opportunities for creative writing, and entertain with comment and humour.

Regular features include members' recipes, authoritative commentary on the natural world locally, recollections of the famous and infamous from this area, and quizzes from our own members to test your little grey cells.

To contact the team with your comments/contributions please email: newsletter@llandudnoareau3a.org.uk