

Sully and District u3a Newsletter April 2026



GROUP NEWS

Mahjong

Following an inauspicious start when we had no one who knew how to play Mahjong, we were luckily joined by someone very knowledgeable. She has trained us patiently and we are coming along nicely.

As with card games there is an element of luck in which tiles come your way, but it takes a lot of skill to make the most of these tiles.

We would like to expand our group and would welcome new members.

At present we meet on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month, at the Old School, 12.30 to 2.30pm

Geology news

There are currently places available on the Geology Walk in Ogmere which is taking place as part of the Valeways Walking Festival.

The title is TROPICAL SEAS, FLASH FLOODS AND HOT SPRINGS.

The leader is Christopher Lee who will be well known to many of us.

Date: Saturday 9th May 2026 Time 10.00---14.00hrs Distance 4 miles

To book a place visit

<https://www.valeofglamorganwalkingfestival.org.uk/> (place cursor over the link and press ctrl + click)

On the site click Book Walks, then scroll down until you reach TROPICAL SEAS, FLASH FLOODS AND HOT SPRINGS

April Speaker's Report

Soul of Japan in 10 Words

Sully u3a members welcomed their latest speaker, Kaori Onoda, a freelance Japanese translator and teacher, who distilled modern day Japan into 10 abstract words and their Kanji symbols.

Kaori showed how each word explains features of Japanese culture. 'Wa 和', or harmony, underlies that, for good life, collaboration and collective understanding or group interest precede the individual's. This is reflected in Japan's geography: an archipelago, where two thirds is mountains, and the majority of its 123 million inhabitants live on coastal regions. The group endeavour to survive and thrive is embedded in Japan's value system; the public self is bigger than the private self, recognition of independency, and how to 'read' the atmosphere of a human interaction ('ba 場') is crucial for social bonds ('en 縁').

On the concept of 'giri 義理' or duty/obligation, once we understood the Kanji symbol, Kaori taught us to recognise the symbol embedded in other words and phrases. So we learned about 'parents of duty' (your in-laws), and 'obligation chocolate' when social niceties mean you need to give a present. There were true love, Valentine and friend chocolates too. Other giri duties were seen in regular checks on business clients.

The consequences of a 'sakura' (cherry blossom) prediction disaster came in the form of 'haji 恥', or the shame concept, a reaction to other people's criticism. The head of the Japan Meteorological Agency who, predicting badly wrong the emergence of cherry blossom south to north one year, found himself apologising live on TV in front of the whole nation. This showed the concept of we-self, not myself: I'm responsible for how we feel (haji) and therefore the duty (giri) to say so.

Our session concluded with the u3a audience on its feet enjoying an impromptu bowing lesson to illustrate the concept of 'uchi to soto 内と外', or the inside and outside presentation of self, and 'ma 間' or learning the time to take a pause to convey feelings. We learned the exact degree of bow needed to give or take a present, or introduce oneself. No flapping arms please, keep body straight, bow from the waist, and pause at the right moment and amount of time to indicate the correct degree of respect.

Arigatou sensei Kaori! A great milestone 'setsu 節' for our u3a.

SJW

Next month's speaker

Thursday 14th May 2026 at 2.00pm.



AN INSIGHT INTO BELLS, BELL RINGING and BELL RESTORATION with NIGEL BOSANKO

Nigel first started bellringing in the early 1970s at Llantrisant ringing for over a decade at church services and weddings, including peals and striking competitions.

Following a chance meeting with a member of the congregation in 2022 a project to restore the bells which had been unringable since 2011 was established.

The presentation offers an insight into the history of bells and bellringing and the various aspects of managing a restoration project from concept to completion.



SCAM/Fraud Warning

Criminals stole nearly £880 million through investment fraud in 2025.

Victims lost an average of £1,675 every minute, according to figures from the City of London Police. In total, £879.8 million was stolen last year—around £2.4 million a day.

In 2025, 34,673 people reported investment fraud to Report Fraud, a 31% increase on the previous year. Reports rose sharply from March, peaking in July and September when many people review or move investments.

How to protect yourself

- Check any firm or adviser using the FCA's [firm checker tool](#) on the FCA website.
- Be wary of unsolicited contact, unusually high returns, or pressure to keep investments confidential.
- Contact the FCA consumer helpline on 0800 111 6768 or report suspicious activity via its website.

Report suspected fraud to Report Fraud at www.reportfraud.police.uk or by calling 0300 123 2040.

Don't forget to visit the Sully u3a website

There is a wealth of useful information on our website, it can be reached at [Sully](#) (place cursor over the link and press ctrl + click) or use the QR code



Also check out the national website

[u3a - Welcome to u3a](#) (place cursor over the link and press ctrl + click)

Re-engage Offering Call Companion Service for people aged 75+

My name is Ailsa and I am the engagement officer covering Wales for the charity Re-engage www.reengage.org.uk Ailsa Guard Re-engage (ailsa.guard@reengage.org.uk). Phone: 02078812375

We are the only charity dedicated to serving people 75+ in the Country, and offer FREE call companions, Free activity groups and Free monthly Tea Parties for people aged 75+

I would love to reach more older people to access our free services

Anyone can sign the older person up (as long as they have their permission) and at present we have volunteers waiting to be signed up for our call companion service, so they would be getting started within a week talking to someone.

For more information follow the link to their web site below

[Re-engage: the charity reducing loneliness in later life](#) (place cursor over the link and press ctrl + click)

Supported Lodgings Hosts,

The opportunity to make a real, lasting difference to a young person's life

The Vale is facing a growing housing crisis, leaving many 16–18-year-olds without a safe place to stay. Despite the vital role it plays, only around 30% of people in the UK are aware of what Supported Lodgings actually do. We're working to change that — and to ensure Supported Lodgings in the Vale receives the recognition it deserves as a life-changing, community-led solution.

We are urgently looking for compassionate people to become Supported Lodgings Hosts, offering a spare room and a stable, supportive environment to a young person who needs it.

What Llamau provides:
£9,360+ per year, tax free
Full training
Ongoing support from our team

Interested? Follow the link below to find out more information.

[What is Supported Lodgings? | National Supported Lodgings Week](#) (place the cursor over the link then press Ctrl + click)

Grant Davies, Supported Lodgings Development Worker.

01446 722574, 07886 271599, www.llamau.org.uk

Llamau

Imagine a World Without Homelessness

Become a Supported Lodgings Host

At Llamau, we're on a mission to provide stable and caring homes for young people who have experienced homelessness. You can play a crucial role in this journey by opening your home to those in need.

Who are we looking for?

We're searching for compassionate individuals or families willing to offer a room and a supportive environment to a young person striving to rebuild their life after homelessness.

Your background doesn't matter – whether you're married or single, employed or not. All you need is a spare room and a genuine desire to help a young person develop the skills necessary for independent living.



WHAT DO YOU GAIN?

Full Training:

We provide comprehensive training to equip you with the knowledge and tools needed to support a young person on their journey to independence.

Financial Support:

Receive a regular weekly payment to cover your costs, ensuring that providing support doesn't create a financial burden.

Ongoing Support:

Llamau is committed to assisting you every step of the way. Our team is here to provide ongoing support, guidance, and assistance whenever you need it.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Contacts can be found in The Vale of Glamorgan, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent, and Caerphilly.



www.llamau.org.uk

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Regards,
Paul Lister (Sully u3a Newsletter editor)