



# Lanark & District U3A Newsletter

Living  
Laughing  
Learning

December 2015

Issue 5

## The CHAIR's report.

Hello again, everyone.

Unbelievably, we have once again retreated from that season of "mist and mellow fruitfulness", and are slap-bang in winter's miserable grip with Christmas ahead on the horizon.

Speaking of which, we have had an enthusiastic up-take of bookings for our Christmas lunch at the New Lanark Mill Hotel on **Wednesday 16th December**. It was such an unmitigated success last year that it's really not surprising that we chose it again for 2015.

Soon, we will have a super new Lanark and District U3A website, courtesy of Robin Lee, who has worked like a Trojan to put it together, and, when it is ready, will present it to the membership at one of our Open Meetings. We'll keep you updated on that...

It only remains for me to wish you all a wonderful Christmas and New Year break and to welcome you **all** back, to our January meeting **on Wednesday, 20th January 2016**.

Rosemary Train (Chairperson)

## General Meeting Dates and Speakers Topics from January 2016

20th January 2016	Members special — 'A Burns Extravaganza'
17th February 2016	Mark Atwood of Sunnyside Antiques — 'An Antiques Roadshow'
16th March 2016	Martin Stepek — 'Mindfulness'
20th April 2016	Charles McCann — 'Flying to Capetown by Helicopter'
18th May 2016	Louise Bustard — <b>AGM</b> and 'My Inspirational Gardens'

A **Cooking group** may be starting up in the new year.

As the festive season is here you may be wondering what to do with any Turkey leftovers.

Here are 2 ideas you may like to consider.

### Caribbean Turkey --- Serves 4

2 tbsp (30ml) oil  
 1 medium onion, sliced  
 1 clove of garlic, crushed  
 2oz (50g) creamed coconut  
 ½ red and ½ green pepper cut into ½ inch (1 cm) chunks  
 Grated rind and juice of 1 lime  
 2 oz (50g) cooked rice  
 1 inch (2.5cm) piece of root ginger, peeled and grated  
 8oz (225g) cooked turkey, cut into ½ inch (1cm) strips  
 1 medium sized pineapple  
 ¼ pint (150ml) pineapple juice  
 2oz (50g) flaked almond  
**Garnish with** 6 slices of mango or orange segments

#### **Method**

In a large frying pan heat the oil then add the onion and garlic and cook until soft. Add the creamed coconut and cook over a low heat for 2 mins. Stir in the peppers, rind and juice of lime, cooked rice, ginger and turkey and cook for 10 mins, stirring occasionally. Cut the pineapple in half lengthways and cut out the flesh from each half, taking care not to score through the skin. Cut the pineapple flesh into 2 inch (2.5cm) pieces and add to the pan, along with the pineapple juice, cook, stirring for a further 5 mins. Toast almonds and stir in. Spoon the mixture into the pineapple shells and serve at once, garnished with thin slices of mango (or orange). Alternatively the dish can be eaten cold.

### Turkey, Cranberry and Walnut Pasta ---Serves 2

225g ( 8oz) pasta quills  
 30ml (2 tbsp) olive oil  
 4 spring onions, sliced  
 225g (8oz ) cooked, leftover turkey, sliced  
 40g (1 ½ oz) walnut halves, halved  
 30ml (2tbsp) lemon juice

#### **Method**

Cook the pasta according to pack instructions, then drain. Meanwhile heat 15ml (1tbsp) olive oil in a frying pan. Add spring onions, turkey and walnuts and fry for 3 minutes. Mix together the remaining olive oil, lemon juice and cranberry sauce. Stir drained pasta and cranberry dressing into turkey mixture and season to taste. Serve with salad.

## Members Survey

Over the last few years there has been a good number of active groups in which members have participated well. As time has progressed some of these groups have had to stop for varying reasons. Group Leaders leaving, not enough members interested etc. Also there are members who are new to the U3A who whilst participating in existing groups have not had the opportunity to put their ideas forward to see what activities may be able to be started, should sufficient demand exist.

At the November general meeting a Survey form was put out to the members who attended on the day. We have had 20 returns. It would be good to get more of your views in order that a better consensus can be made going forward.

We would like to hear more about what interests you may have and also what you would like, if possible, in order that the U3A may better meet the needs of the membership as a whole.

The survey form will be emailed to all members shortly.

It is very difficult to plan ahead if we don't have your input so could you please let Nelson Waters know should you have any ideas or views that you wish to put forward.

You can email Nelson at [nelsonwaters@btinternet.com](mailto:nelsonwaters@btinternet.com), or give him your completed form.

## What the U3A means to me

The ethos of the U3A is that all persons, from whatever walk of life, are welcome and included.

Presenting a natural and welcoming environment helps people to join and make new friends and it is especially helpful when people are new to the area and are discovering what is available to them locally.

### Alison and Maurice found this when they came to Lanark.

In March 2011, my husband Maurice and I returned to the UK after having lived eight years in SW France.

After 3-4 weeks of intensive house-hunting, we found a house in Lanark. We knew nothing at all about the town, other than it had a public library and a railway line.



Our bungalow was situated at the end of a cul-de-sac so it was up to us to make a social life for ourselves and I had already started to research the U3A in Biggar.

We also joined the public library and one day, in September 2011, I saw a notice announcing an inaugural meeting of the U3A to see what interest their might be. So, on 13<sup>th</sup> October, we joined about 30 people in the Clydesdale Inn, where there was a speaker who explained to us how the U3A functioned.

There were only a few groups at first. We put our names down for the Outings group and the Walking group.

The Outings group, led by Kay Gall, helped us get our bearings, use the train and bus (with a bus pass!) and discover wonderful museums and places of interest in the area. The Walking group, led by Pat Greenshields soon had us talking to different people along the way, discovering New Lanark and the beautiful river Clyde with its peregrine falcons and waterfalls. We had previously only associated the Clyde with shipbuilding.

As interest in the U3A grew, so many more groups were created and I/we found ourselves also involved in the Beginners Italian, Advanced French, Singing, Scrabble, sometimes Theatre, Luncheon, and Pub Lunch and Discussion groups. With each new group came new friends, some of whom have become very dear to us. I started to meet Pat and Kay for a coffee in the Clydesdale for a blether (new word for me!) in French and to meet Sandra Archer every 3 weeks for the same in German.

The monthly meetings now are a chance to catch up with friends, as well as to listen to interesting speakers and I was able to give a talk on our life in France at one of them - the least I could do in view of all the time and effort that the group leaders make voluntarily.

In August, 2013, Maurice was diagnosed with dementia and we have received nothing but love and support from our many U3A friends which I never could have imagined when we first arrived in Lanark.

So thank you, U3A.

*Alison Burroughs*

## Calling all budding poets!

The poetry writing group would like a few new members. You don't have to be a poet or writer to come along, just have a love of words. The group is led by Muriel Burns and we meet on the last Thursday of the month at 2.30pm in Muriel's home, 16 Honeyman Crescent, Lanark. Muriel always finds some interesting task for us to do. So if you don't know a 'Cinquain' from a 'Tanka' or a 'Tetractys' from a 'Piku' - and you would like to know- then the poetry group could be for you.

**I particularly enjoy when someone says a page number from a book, another person says the number of a line on that page and a third person says the number of a word on that line.**

**We do this three times and then have to write a poem incorporating the three words.**

**This is usually for homework!**

**Here is a poem written by Jan Train using the three words, 'small', 'violets' and 'spots'.**

**She scattered a handful of poppy seeds  
Small black specks which took flight in the breeze  
Some grew where they fell, some flourished in weeds  
Red flares symbolising the return of peace.**

**She wanted something to remember him by  
A flower to remind her that life moves on  
Enter the violet, diffident and shy  
Exit the poppy, scarlet and wanton.**

**The violets thrived in that cool mossy place  
Purple and gold – injured spots in the shade  
In their velvety darkness she buried her face  
The colour of old bruises means pain will fade.**

One task Muriel gave us was to write about the terrible earthquake in Nepal.

Here is what Muriel and I wrote:-

**'Shaken'** by Muriel Burns

I am shaking  
My house is shaking  
Everything around me is shaking

My heart is shaking  
My hands are shaking  
My child looking at me is shaking

The doorway beckons  
The frame, leaning sideways, is shaking  
But I must go through

Familiar buildings have changed  
Their outlines altered as they continue to shake  
It's a different world from five minutes ago

I turn to look at my house, my home,  
Tiles are shaking, sliding, tumbling,  
Crashing to the ground

My friend comes towards me  
We need no words to know  
That our friendship will take us through this  
Unshaken

**Spiral**, by Elizabeth Burns.

From the spin of the wheel  
comes a spiral  
threading itself  
up through the vessel  
until it reaches the rim  
  
where the twist in the clay  
slips into air  
then travels on invisibly  
beyond the turning earth  
and up into the whirling stars



A huge banner to mark National Poetry

Day is on the Sailor's Ark building on the Canongate, Edinburgh where it will stay until next summer.

The short poem, SPIRAL, inspired by the spinning motion of the potter's wheel, was selected from a shortlist of five by a public vote in a competition run by the

Scottish Poetry Library. Elizabeth Burns sadly passed away last summer and we thank Muriel for letting us include her daughter Elizabeth's poem in our newsletter. If you're in Edinburgh then do go and have a look and admire a great achievement.

**28<sup>th</sup> April 2015** by Sheila Easton

The birds have stopped singing.  
Will they ever sing again?  
So much horror, so many deaths.  
Devastation and destruction!  
Dreams shattered, lives forever changed.  
Noisy machines replace the birdsong –  
Diggers and hydraulic jacks alongside pickaxes and shovels.  
Silent tears, muffled sobs.  
But tomorrow the sun will rise,  
The birds will sing again,  
And the rescue of one boy brings hope.

*If you decide to join us you will be made most welcome. Contact Muriel on 01555 662935.*

## Outings group



The group had a meeting recently and identified a variety of outings that they would like to do. The first one was on Wednesday 11th November, when 20 members travelled to Edinburgh to visit the [Surgeons' Hall Museums](#) in Nicolson Street.

We arrived at Waverley station just before the Armistice Day 2 minute silence, which we observed, then we walked on to the museum.

Recently refurbished and re-opened in September, the collections date from 1699.

We had a talk from a member of staff while going round some of the displays, on the history of surgery, the pioneers, techniques, artefacts, and the notorious side of the learning curve, namely Burke and Hare. After spending some time viewing the extensive display cabinets, most of us adjourned to the nearby CiaoRoma restaurant for an enjoyable lunch, then spent 'own' time before departing for home.



Our next outing is to visit the **Sikh Temple, the Glasgow Gurdwara** in December.

*Cary Jones*

### Book Group

Our group have read and discussed three books since the summer.

"US" by David Nicholas, which we all agreed, was gentle and enjoyable but quite compelling too.

"Elizabeth is Missing" by Emma Healey which was perhaps rather too close for comfort, as it portrayed dementia through the eyes of Maud, the sufferer. It could be really amusing at times, as, for example, when Maud told her daughter, Helen, that she should get rid of the cleaner because the girl was absolutely hopeless at her job. Helen looked at her mother in puzzlement and stated that she didn't have a cleaner! Then the penny dropped and Helen said, "Mum, that's your grand daughter you're talking about!!"

As I write this, we have still to discuss our third book, "The Children Act" by Ian McEwan, and when we do meet to discuss this, we will choose our next set of books for the new year.

*Rosemary Train*

### Craft Group

Why buy ready made cards when as you can see we've been busily engaged making our own personalised Christmas Cards. It was very satisfying, tea, talking and craft all in one. Release your inner talent come along and find out what craft work you can do. It will surprise you.

**Contact Muriel on 01555 662935.**

### Poetry readers group

We meet in Lanark Library and read poems to each other. Then we talk about them.

The good things are, first, the search – you have to re-read old favourites, or trawl through the internet, looking for a poem you like, that fits that month's theme (poems about islands, poems from Commonwealth countries – and *are* there any poems about clothes?) Then, at the meeting – second Thursday of the month, 11.30 till 1 – we read our poems to each other. And talk about them. This is the second good thing – discovering a poet that's new to you, going home to indulge yourself by buying a book of their poetry. The third good thing is discussing poems you've always loved, with others who love them too. And getting folk to explain the obscure bits. The fourth good thing is lunch. One time the discussion in the Woodpecker (what makes a good funeral) became so heated that the waitress came over to shut us up and ended up joining in.





## Lunch Group

After a lovely summer break the Lunch Group resumed at the end of September with a visit to the Omorpha Taverna, in Bellshill. Our taste buds were souvlaki and pork loin voskou, to name but a few.

In October, twenty-seven members visited the Mill Inn, in the heritage village of Coulter. If good food, low wooden beams, picturesque surroundings and a touch of history is your idea of an ideal setting then there is no better place to visit than the Mill Inn which is steeped in history going all the way back to the 12th century.....there is even a ghost!!

By the time you read this article the group will have paid a visit to The Grapevine Restaurant in Bothwell. Watch this space.....!

**We're the group who lunch, we have a good time,  
We appreciate food, we sip fine wine.  
We're the group who lunch, we're busy but free,  
No one does luncheon better than we.**

*Gillian Forrest*

## Pub Lunch & Discussion Group

We meet on the first Friday of the month in The Crown Tavern in Lanark.

We talk about anything and everything as you can see. Why not come along and see if you would enjoy being a member of the group.

◆ **September topic: Are nuclear weapons ever justified?**

The group were very positive that in an ideal world we would never hold a stock of nuclear weapons, however it would act as an insurance policy, especially with so much unrest in the world. There is an estimate of a world stock pile of 15,695 nuclear weapons. After a long and serious debate on this subject a vote of 18 to 2 went in favour of the U.K. holding their present stock.

◆ **October topic: How can we give more support to Syrian refugees?**

Our government has offered places to 20,000 Syrian refugees over the next five years, but in the meantime have spent £1 billion to support them in camps in the Lebanon.

The general agreement by the group was that the U.K. can do more by way of increasing the numbers for genuine people seeking asylum.

◆ **November topic: What was the best, interesting, or the most scenic place you have ever visited?**

A more light-hearted and personal subject. The response was excellent with all members really involved.

We were taken on a magical tour to Sri Lanka, Australia, Canada, Africa, America and nearer to home, St Kilda, Iona, and Cornwall.

There were stories attached to each journey and places where memories were relived and enjoyed by all.

## Walking group

Recent walks enjoyed by the walking group have been Greenhead Moss in Wishaw (see photo - a huge former landfill and opencast site now teeming with wildlife) Carmichael estate (where some of us saw two abandoned mansions –see picture – and learned about quincunxes) Biggar (where torrential rain forced us to seek refuge in the new museum and to cut short the longer walk) and New Lanark (where some of us discovered a new route to the falls, while others completed the 7-mile circuit of the reserve between New Lanark, Bonnington & Kirkfieldbank.



In July we walked along the Tweed at Peebles on a pleasant warm summer's day - yes, there was one - the short walkers had a torch-lit journey through the railway tunnel and the 7-milers crossed the Tweed at Lyne and raced back past Barns Tower along the riverside, to return to Peebles in time for lunch at the Crown.



At most venues, walkers have had a choice of a shorter all-on-the-level walk of about 3 miles or so, or a longer more challenging walk. Ideally both groups meet up for lunch, but predicting how long each walk will take is a science the walks leader has yet to master.

Various members of the group have volunteered to lead the alternative walks – thanks are due to Ian, Cathy, Christine, and Anne H.

Future walks will be at Baronshaugh (Motherwell), Lanark Loch, Carluke, and Forth. In the spring it is hoped to do a two-level walk along the Forth & Clyde Canal, with the longer walkers visiting two Roman forts and walking a section of the Antonine Wall.

Walks take place on the **first Wednesday** of the month, starting at **10.00**.

To join the walkers email list, contact Anne.

[a4rmstrong@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:a4rmstrong@yahoo.co.uk)

*Ken Forrest*

## Gardening Group

Our very successful Gardening Group is going from strength to strength and now has 24 members. We naturally do not stop in the summer and the following are reports of visits we made to two wonderful gardens.

Eleven members of the Gardening Group had a very enjoyable day at **Threave Garden and House** at Castle Douglas. After coffee we were taken round the main parts of the garden by the Head Gardener Brian Corr. He was very enthusiastic and was happy to answer all the questions which were put to him.



The Threave Estate covers 64 acres so Brian could obviously not cover the whole area. I am sure some of us will be tempted to return sometime in the future.

After lunch we had a guided tour of Threave House. Our Guide, who was on her first solo guiding job, was very good. She had to check her notes only a few times when we asked about certain objects in the house or facts about the Douglas family.

Rain was forecast in that area but the only time it did rain was when we were going round the house. That was good timing!



Quiet Area



Einstien's Quote



Another Public Garden visited was **Newhall at Carlops**. The lady of the house Tricia Kennedy took us round the entire garden. She was very enthusiastic and knowledgeable about gardening in general but particularly about her garden. It took us quite a while to go round the garden because of the many questions and discussions on the way.



We then had, in the conservatory, the most wonderful low cost lunch any of us have ever had. It was such a memorable day that provisional arrangements have been made to return to Newhall in late spring to see the garden in another season and of course that wonderful lunch.

Our November meeting took the form of a quiz. It was set and presented by Ian MacRae and covered a variety of gardening topics including plant identification, Public Gardens in UK, famous gardens abroad, herbicides etc.

We marked our own score cards when Ian went over all 15 questions giving the right answers.

I only mention that in passing and please do not read anything into it!!!

The winner was Elspeth Yuill, in second place was Rosemary Gottlieb and after a tie-breaker between 4 members Meg MacDonald was declared third. It was quite a taxing quiz but we all enjoyed the experience.

If you are wondering where the Group Leader came in the scoring - well I will just say I was somewhere in the second half.

*Nelson*

## THEATRE

Once again we have seen excellent performances on our recent sojourns to the theatre. The current programme will be updated again shortly and will be made available when ready.

### Barnum by Shine

Musical theatre comes alive in this wonderful show by Shine as good as the professional show!



I felt that I had been transported to a live circus show, the actors performing tricks and interacting with the audience during the intervals and doing amazing tricks during the show the highlight being Barnum walking on the high wire -nail-biting to watch. The young man who played Barnum was superb demonstrating outstanding musical and acting abilities

Another winner from Shine, roll on to The Wizard of Oz in January and Jesus Christ Superstar in March.

Put your name down now !!

Tickets for **Shine** disappear fast.

*Lorraine*

### The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time.

On 19th August a group of us travelled to King's theatre in Glasgow to see the play The curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time. It is an adaptation based on a best selling book by Mark Hadden. It tells the story of a teenage boy (Christopher) with Asperger syndrome who discovers a dead dog in his garden. The play relates the steps he takes to investigate the dog's murder.

This was a brilliant stage play giving the audience an incite into how people with difficulties view the world. It was funny, moving and thought provoking. The stage presentation, acting and technology used were first class. The scene where Christopher set up his toy railway was cleverly executed. The production held the audience's attention at all times and if you missed it I would recommend you catch it next time. If only to see the puppy at the end!

*Janie Easton.*

### A Truly Memorable Musical Extravaganza!

On Saturday, 26th September, a good number of the theatre group attended the 'Beyond the Barricade' show in the Memorial Hall, Lanark. 'Beyond the Barricade' is the name of a musical theatre touring group made up of four musicians & four professional vocalists, with one member undertaking the roles of singer, keyboard player & musical director!



All of the vocalists had previously sung in the West End of London and Manchester productions of Les Miserable so hence the company's title.

As we took our seats, little did we realise the absolute treat which lay in store!

The company kicked off with a rousing rendition of the theme song from Miss Saigon and instantly we knew this evening was going to be particularly good. The programme showed the sheer versatility of the artistes with a selection of songs sung from many popular musicals including Phantom of the Opera, Evita, West Side Story, Carousel, Jesus Christ Super Star,

Jersey Boys & Les Miserables. More modern productions like Chess by Abba, Monty Python's Spamalot & The Rocky Horror Show by Richard O'Brien were also enthusiastically & brilliantly delivered.

The audience particularly enjoyed singing along to the catchy Spamalot tune, 'Always look On the Bright Side of Life' and the upbeat, 'Master of the House' from Les Mis. had the whole house clapping & singing along with gay abandon.

The evening passed all too quickly but many could be heard leaving 'the Memo' humming their favourite tunes or reporting that their spirits were uplifted. What more could one ask for on an evening out so, hasty ye back, 'Beyond the Barricades!'

*Margaret Dunlop*

## The whacky, weird, and wonderful world of the Web



The March and June newsletters featured pieces about the Internet and let you know about some of the various information and types of websites that can be discovered.

Everyone has their favourite websites and here are a few more of mine.

They are in no particular order but generally grouped into “types”.

This is the third and final instalment.

I hope you have enjoyed this quick look at what’s available, but please remember to browse carefully.

### **Money Savers**

Surveys

<http://www.i-say.com/>

Want to earn some money? I have been paid £50 for just doing on-line surveys over the last year. They normally take about 15-20 minutes each and are usually very simple.

### **Leisure Time**

Crosswords

<http://www.theguardian.com/crosswords>

While away 10 minutes and give yourself a brain boost. The crosswords here range from simple to infuriating! Choose your mood or ability.

Television Soaps

<http://www.digitalspy.co.uk/soaps/>

If you are interested in any of the UK soaps then this will give you the heads up on what is coming. Sometimes a bit of a plot spoiler

### **Slightly Weird**

Time Calculator

<http://www.timeanddate.com/>

This is a brilliant little site and well worth a quick visit! If you want to know how long you have lived in minutes, or how many hours before you are 100, then this is the site for you. It calculates time in between two dates. It also lets you print calendars as well as lots of date/time features.

Pointer

<http://www.pointerpointer.com/>

Now this site is really weird and totally useless, but strangely captivating. After going to the site put your cursor anywhere on the screen and a picture will be displayed pointing to your cursor. That’s all it does!!

### **Finally**

All of the websites above are safe so have fun, but the web is full of viruses consequently make sure your anti-virus software is **always** up-to-date.



*Robin Lee*

Lanark & District U3A

## And Finally.....

I expect, like me, you get tired of some of the health and safety issues and political correctness **that** seems to surround our lives nowadays. The following is an extract from an obituary that appeared in the London Times.

### The Passing of an Old Friend 'Common Sense'

Today we mourn the passing of an old friend, 'Common Sense' who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, as his birth records were lost long ago in bureaucratic red tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as:

Knowing when to come in out of the rain  
Why the early bird gets the worm  
Life isn't always fair  
And maybe it was my fault

'Common Sense' lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can afford) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge). His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place and he lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining unruly children.

'Common Sense' took a beating when criminals received better treatment than their victims and you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home while the burglar could sue you for assault. He finally gave up the will to live after a woman failed to realise that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap and was awarded a huge settlement.

'Common Sense' was preceded in death by his parents, 'Truth' and 'Trust', by his wife 'Discretion', by his daughter 'Responsibility' and by his son, 'Reason'.

He is survived by his 5 stepbrothers, 'I Know My Rights', 'I Want It Now', 'Someone Else Is To Blame', 'I'm A Victim' and 'Pay Me For Doing Nothing'.

Not many attended his funeral because so few realised he was gone.

*Sheila Easton*

### What are you doing on **Wednesday 20th January?**

This is a meeting you don't want to miss, so we'll see you all there.

Come along to **Lanark Memorial Hall for 2pm** for an afternoon of fun as we celebrate our National bard the U3A way.

It promises to be different and full of surprises.

### **'A Burns Extravaganza'**

Until then, have yourselves a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Contributions from anyone who has something to say, be it about the U3A as a whole, one of the groups or as an individual are welcome. Please send items for inclusion, by email, to Sheila Easton at [sheilaeaston40@gmail.com](mailto:sheilaeaston40@gmail.com)

**Thanks to everyone who contributed.**