

### The CHAIR's report.

Hello again, everyone. Hasn't the last year gone by in a flash?

As you know, I took over as your Chairperson in 2014, along with Loraine, who took over as Vice Chair. It has been a busy and interesting year which brought me a lot of challenges. Challenges are opportunities, and as such, over the year, with the support of Loraine, the Committee and yourselves, they were grasped and the U3A has continued to flourish so, **together**, we must be doing something right! Hopefully, this illustrates that as members you are continuing to find L&D U3A interesting and enjoyable...



Now to reflect:

A great deal has been achieved over the last year, thanks to the effort and commitment of members, but nothing could have been achieved without the sterling efforts of our dedicated Group Leaders who manage to offer a fabulous assortment of activities, both social and educational. **Thank you all!**

Over the year there were, at one point **29** groups running, some of which were new, **Social Cycling, Poetry Writing and Humour** to name a few. A second **Book** Group was established and we now have two **Scrabble** groups who meet in Carluke and Lanark. Unfortunately we lost **Intermediate Italian** and **Singing For Fun** (both of which were popular) due to external circumstances.

Another popular group, **Outings**, needs a new Group leader/s to run it from September, as Kay Gall is required elsewhere for babysitting duties for her new wee grandson. Best Wishes go to Kay in her new role.

During the year there have been events which have saddened us, due to the loss of two members., but we are happy for Pat Greenshields, who was our Business Secretary, who recently moved to Melrose and is continuing with another branch of the U3A there.

We hope we have succeeded in entertaining you at our General Meetings with a diversity of Speakers including 'African Adventures' and 'The Police Mountain Rescue' to name but a couple.

In December we had a lovely Christmas Lunch, with over 100 members attending, at the New Lanark Mill Hotel, accompanied by an assortment of entertainment and just recently 54 members joined in the yearly excursion to The Kelpies, followed by a boat trip to explore Inchcolm Island in the Firth of Forth. What a wonderful day out, rounded off by an enjoyable meal on the way home. Thank you to the committee members who organised both these events. No mean feat, I'll be bound.

Due to applying for and receiving a grant from 'Awards 4 All', we have been able to purchase our own projection equipment which is now an addition to the microphones that we have. The equipment will be put to good use at future General Meetings.

I'd like to mention also that we have net-worked with other South Lanarkshire U3As exchanging suggestions and ideas for future speakers, etc. The South Lanarkshire U3As are East Kilbride, Hamilton, Biggar and ourselves.

We have also managed to introduce a Newsletter this year, which we hope you have found informative. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to it and we would welcome your input for future issues.

Finally, **AT LAST**

I would like to thank you all for attending the AGM where a change of committee members took place with Lesley, Malcolm, Kay, Bob and Jean leaving, a big thank to them for their hard work and support. Margaret Dunlop, Anne Armstrong and Ken Forrest have joined the committee and I hope that they enjoy the challenges/opportunities ahead and I look forward to working with them.

I hope you have a good break and enjoy your holiday. If I don't see you over the break then I look forward to seeing you all at our first General Meeting of the 2015/16 session in September.

Thank you one and all for your support.

*Rosemary Train*

The **2015/16** session starts in **September 2015**.

**General Meeting—Dates for your Diary.**

<b>2015</b> —>	16th September	21st October	18th November	16th December	Xmas Lunch New Lanark Mill Hotel
<b>2016</b> —>	20th January	17th February	16th March	13th April	18th May

(Third WEDNESDAY in the month at 2pm at Lanark Memorial Hall.)

**ACTIVE—Summer groups.**

As you are aware most of the groups stop their activities for the summer months, there are however ones which keep going.

The groups running over the summer, June to August, this year are

Art            Books 2            Croquet            Gardening            Social Cycling            Walking

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Our annual excursion took members to visit **'The Kelpies'** at Helix Park, then by boat to visit Historic Scotland's, **Inchcolm Island**.



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Our annual excursion took members to visit **'The Kelpies'** at Helix Park, then by boat to visit Historic Scotland's, **Inchcolm Island**.

The Kelpies portray two, quite magnificent to say the least, horse heads by the sculptor Andy Scott. We enjoyed a guided tour of The Kelpies – the tour guide informed our group about the real Clydesdale horses which the sculptures represent: how Andy Scott worked out not only where the sculptures would be placed but also encompassed the legend of the Kelpie ie spirit of the water. The legend tells us that a Kelpie (a shape shifter) is likely to take the form of a horse when near water – The Kelpies are placed alongside the Forth and Clyde canal. One can only remain dumbstruck at the vision of such an artist.

We were taken inside the 'down head' and could see the engineering structures required. Not only are you unlikely to find a straight line but you are then told that the panels, which make up the horses heads, are all different ie. no two are alike! It only took 90 days to construct the heads on-site and only two panels, from the 500 that make up the head required readjustment– now that is good planning!

You can see the shape of neck muscles: jaw muscles and even the teeth of one horse and, quite honestly, if you look at the heads long enough then you are likely to stroke it as you would a real horse. The Kelpies will, no doubt, become quite an icon for Scotland and quite right too. They are not to be missed. Helix Park is still developing and the visitor centre will be finished shortly.



### **Then onwards back through time,**

We were whisked away to South Queensferry to catch the ferry for Inchcolm Island.

This island contained the ruins of an abbey: war battlements and a variety of wildlife. Inchcolm Island lies in the hands of Historic Scotland and the name means 'Columba's Isle' but doesn't have any links to St Columba. The Augustinian canons settled here in early 12<sup>th</sup> century and you can see the best preserved monastic buildings of the period. A hermit lived here during the Dark Ages and the oldest relic on the island is a hogback tombstone dating from 1123 – however, getting to this site was rather precarious as nesting birds were protecting their eggs and one was being attacked from all angles! We spent 1.5 hours on the island exploring its treasures and enjoying a picnic lunch.

The weather was kind to us – we had a calm sea: sunny spells and no wind.

Following our visit to Inchcolm Island we then treated ourselves to High Tea at a carvery near Livingstone.

This was an adventurous trip as we had to time the buses to get us to the Kelpies on time but also to leave to ensure we arrived at the ferry on time for Inchcolm Island. However, all plans worked out well.

From the volume of emails and personal thanks received from members, I think the organisers 'cracked a winner' – members were stating they had a fabulous day out and good value for money.

### **Editor's note:**

Thanks to **Anne Hood, Kay Gall and Sheila Easton, the three** organisers of the day.



## Report on the U3A Walking group

The walking group, started under Pat Greenshields' excellent leadership, was left in a very healthy state when Pat moved away. We have almost 50 members, and between 10 and 20 walkers regularly joining our walks on the first Wednesday of the month.



Walks have been mostly local, and not too demanding in terms of length or difficulty, followed by lunch in a convenient establishment.

Now that the group is under new management, we have attempted to cater also for walkers who want to stretch themselves with a five or six mile, more challenging walk. This has met with mixed success – our February walk in wintry conditions at Chatelherault saw Bob lead a shortish, flat walk while Anne and three others did the full five miles. Both groups met for lunch. A total of 20 walkers participated, and comments were favourable.

In March, 13 walkers, led by Bob, enjoyed a gentle stroll around Dalzell estate, with lunch at the Garrion Bridges tearoom.

Our ambitious plan for another two-level walk in Peebles, the Tweed walk, to be led by Anne and Meg respectively, was scuppered by blizzards in April. More than 20 folk had signed up for this walk. We hope to re-schedule it for later in the year, but have not yet got two leaders available to lead both the short and the long versions.

Anyone who would like to recce either the 3 mile or 7 mile version with Anne, and then lead one walk, is urged to contact Anne. (aarm5trong@yahoo.co.uk)

Our May walk was another local on-the-level stroll, this time starting at Crossford and following the Clyde walkway before returning to the start. The Valley International café is now closed, but Silver Birch was happy to welcome 15 of us.

Our June walk will be another local, short, easy walk, at Mauldslie.

**Our July U3A walk (Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July) is The Tweed Walk - either long or short version.**

If this isn't the sort of thing you want as a walker, help us organise something more to your taste!

Anne Armstrong

**'Lanark U3A art group has enjoyed a year of drawing, painting, art appreciation, eating cake and chatting.**

**We meet every Tuesday from 2-4pm at one of two venues, Ian Irving's house where we watch and discuss films on art or artists, and on the following week the home of Linda Dawson where the practical classes are held.**

**If you are interested in art, come along and join.**

**Linda Dawson**

### **Book Group (1)**

'Our Group read **'Still Alice'** by Lisa Genova in April, to discuss at our get-together on 16th.

Opinions were mixed, but we all found it rather sobering and felt compelled to do the exercises to test ourselves for signs of Alzheimers. Maybe we are all too near the age group who really worry about this to read a book on this particular subject!

In May, we read **'The Girl On The Train'** by Paula Hawkins and had a lively discussion when we met on the 19th.

Our Group resumes in September, and in May, we chose the book that we can read over the Summer months, ready to discuss then'.

Rosemary

## Report on the U3A poetry readers group

For a year and a half, we have been meeting every month in a room in Lanark library, to share our enjoyment of poetry and to discover poems and poets that are new to us.

Currently we have a dozen members. We meet on the second Thursday of the month.

We agree a theme each month, then bring along and read out two poems on the theme. Sometimes there are copies for everybody, sometimes we are read to from a book, though the acoustics in the Library aren't helpful.

Recent themes have been: poems in translation, poems by past poets laureate, poems by Commonwealth poets and Liverpool poets, humorous poems, poems about clothing, food, water, weather, animals, remembering (this last was the theme for national Poetry Day last October, when the library helped us celebrate by providing coffee and scones.)

Colin has provided musical and spoken word recordings, Anne sang one of Adam McNaughton's poems, all have contributed poems and opinions. June will be our last meeting before the summer, but we will be back in the autumn.

Anne Armstrong ([aarm5trong@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:aarm5trong@yahoo.co.uk) for more information)

Pub Lunch and Discussion Group

Over the past three months our group has been lively, with a diversity of topics engendering much thought and banter.

***What would your thought be to the following points that were discussed.***

March - Is the U.K. food industry corrupt and devious in their business practices?

- The UK has a £70 billion annual food budget. That 3 billion ready meals are eaten in the UK in 2012.
- The knowledge that MANY different companies food products are made in the same factory
- The fact that Industrial food manufacturers use antioxidants to make food look better and extend shelf life.
- That Britain spends £29.4 billion on fast food every year and that this is growing by 1.7% annually.
- Why Nine million people in the U.K. are obese. Is BOGOF (buy one get one free) good value for money?
- Can food manufacturers be trusted to describe on the package the preparation and the content of the product.?
- Do some food supermarkets over stock several types of the same product, and do they charge manufacturers to have their product promoted more favourably?

April—How can we halt the radicalisation by extremist groups in the U.K.

Why has the British Government appointed an extremism task force.

Disruption by so called extremist preachers is a priority to protect society but without removing freedom of speech on legitimate and lawful comment.

Give support and advice to organisations to confront extremist groups and advise on abuses of charitable status.

Do we need to work with internet companies to restrict access to terrorist material.

Identify extremist content to include family filters

Set up a dedicated public communications platform and challenge the extremist worldview

To protect children in our schools from extremist views and bar individuals involved in managing and teaching in all schools.

Extremist preachers use our higher education institutions as a platform for spreading their messages of hate.

Our prisons house some of the most dangerous extremist and terrorist people, we must take control by way of Muslim Prison Chaplains who are trained to challenge the theological arguments used by these prisoners to justify their extremist views.

Facebook and Google must act responsibly in its content.

Muslim parents must engage in the fight against extremist propaganda and help stop their children move to the so called Islamic State

Should Jihadists be allowed to re-enter the U.K.

May - The origin of well known phrases and sayings.

This was a lighter topic to finish group meetings for the summer recess and produced some interesting revelations.

Everyone entered into the subject by doing their homework via the internet and also a publication entitled "Red Herrings and White Elephants"

Many sayings dated back to early military and naval days and it sometimes took on an entirely different meaning from the original.

The group has an average of over twenty members per meeting and a good mix of male and female members.

We reconvene on Friday 4th September for the new session and welcome old and new members.

Meetings are held on the first Friday of each month in The Crown Tavern Lanark—Commencing at 12.30 pm prompt.

Make a date in your diary!

Ken Forrest

**'The Proclaimers'**

On Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> May, a group of us attended a 'gig' at Lanark Memorial Hall to see The Proclaimers.

The show was opened by a young singer/songwriter, Declan Welsh, who entertained us with some of his songs.

The Proclaimers came on stage to a full house and soon had the audience clapping and singing along to many of their well-known numbers – 'Let's Get Married', 'Sunshine on Leith', 'Letter to America' and 'Cap in Hand' – to name but a few.

By the time they reached the finale with '500 Miles' the audience was on its feet. They returned for an encore, of course! All the time they were supported by their superb backing group.

A great evening was enjoyed by all!

Janie Easton

**THEATRE—New Programme**

A programme of performances starting in August has been put together and will be available shortly.

As theatre performances are always evolving the programme will be subject to change. It will be put on the website and emailed to all members.

Please let Loraine know if you are interested in going to any of the performances in the programme.

## Table Tennis

This group led by Colin Bulloch with coach Kevin Johnson continues to meet throughout the summer at the new time of 3.15 - 4.45 on Fridays at Lanark Lifestyles.

With a summer like this indoor sports are a must!  
Kay Gall

## Social Cycling

Our group is very much in its infancy and doing its best to get itself up and pedalling. A couple of people who had signed up at the beginning have had to decide not to join any rides for the time being. And we have not been helped by the very unseasonal weather.

A ride scheduled for the end of March had to be cancelled due to windy, wet and cold conditions. Again, in early May, we cancelled because of heavy rain.

For the two rides in April there were just 2 of us: the first was a 12-mile run from Lanark to Hyndford, Sandilands and Cartland Bridge; the second, on a beautiful sunny afternoon, from Tinto to Thankerton and Carmichael, a very pleasant 11-mile circle.

More recently, in mid-May, we had three riders for an 11-mile circular route from Forth to Auchingray and Falla. This time, though the morning was quite wet it cleared up for us in the afternoon and conditions turned out good for cycling - in spite of a brief shower of hailstones. A stop at the high point on Blackhill Road, on our way back to Forth, allowed us to take in the brilliant view of the surrounding countryside. It may surprise some that there are so many quiet back roads in Clydesdale which are almost traffic free and through very pleasant landscape as well!

Our next ride is on Tuesday 9 June, starting at 2 pm from Abington and going to Crawford. For now we are planning rides of just 10-12 miles and trying to avoid 'brutish' climbs - though some 'undulating terrain' must always be reckoned with!

We continue throughout the summer, with two rides each month, usually on a Monday or Tuesday afternoon

If you would like to give it a go, just get in touch. [jlfooster40@btinternet.com](mailto:jlfooster40@btinternet.com)

## Lunch Group

### Wednesday, 23rd September 2015

This will be our first lunch of the new session.

Come and join us.  
What a great way to make new friends.



Various venues have been visited recently and proved to be excellent.

Instead of having a lunch for our March outing we opted for a High Tea at the ML One Restaurant, located within the New College Lanarkshire (formerly Motherwell College).

We were transported to the magical, mystical factory of Willy Wonka for a Chilli & Chocolate High Tea Extravaganza where we thoroughly enjoyed the delicious delights prepared by the chefs of the future. It was great to see such enthusiasm displayed by the young students along with their culinary skills and a good evening was had by all. The restaurant holds monthly themed events throughout the college year and



lunches can be had Monday to Friday at very reasonable prices.  
Give it a go!

During April we stayed closer to home, paying a visit to La Piazza, Braidwood where we sampled, perhaps, not all typically Italian courses, but most enjoyable just the same. Thirty-four members attended in April making that the biggest turnout of the session.

In May, last but by no means least, our final lunch for this session was held at Shieldhill Castle Hotel, Quothquan. Majestic scenery, beautiful hotel, wonderful food and a great wee blether with lovely people.  
What more can one say!

Recommendations of venues are always welcome even if you are not a member of the Lunch Group.

Email: Gillian - [gillianforrest@live.co.uk](mailto:gillianforrest@live.co.uk)

Or Sheila - [sheilaeaston40@gmail.com](mailto:sheilaeaston40@gmail.com)

## Outings Group

Most recently we have visited the National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh (March) for an innovative exhibition, Beauty by Design - linking the renaissance art collections of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery and Scottish National Gallery to contemporary fashion design, practice and display. This was followed by a related talk on beauty and fashion talk at the National Galleries.

In April we headed to Glasgow for a behind the scenes tour of the Kings Theatre and afterwards most took up the special offer of a free guided tour of the Mitchell Library including some places the public would normally see.

In May in place of our normal monthly outing there was the annual U3A excursion - to the Kelpies and Inchcolm Island rounding off another very interesting year.

For almost four years I have led this group visiting a wide variety of attractions in the Central belt and have been privileged to have shared these experiences (and very good lunches) with a large number of other U3A members.

However a change in personal commitments means that I am no longer able to commit to leading an outing on the second Wednesday of each month each year from August to June.

I would welcome approaches from any U3A member (or better still 2 or 3 members) willing to share this most rewarding role with me so that this group can continue to exist.

Kay Gall



Border Biscuit Beauties

## Italian Group by Kay Gall

The beginners Italian group finished up on May 28th with a meal at La Vigna when the group members and friends were able to practice their skills in ordering a meal. The staff at La Vigna had obliged by providing a menu in Italian and agreed to address the group only in Italian when taking orders for food and drink. It was a good end to a good year.

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

The March newsletter featured a piece 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"



### Featured in the March newsletter were 'Knowledge Boosters'

Learning <http://www.futurelearn.com/courses>  
Books <http://www.bookboon.com/>  
Interesting Discussions <http://www.ted.com/>

This issue features a variety of sites from several different types.

### Money Savers

Amazon Local deals <http://www.amazon.co.uk/>

If you have an Amazon account you can get some great deals by signing up to the daily offers from Amazon local for Glasgow or Edinburgh. I have bought a few things through Amazon local. For example I recently bought a slate house name for £19 which was normally £63. There is quite a wide range of offers.

### Leisure Times

Poetry <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/>

I really like this site just for reading some great poems sent in by anyone and everyone. This is a verse from Februarys archive called "The man who won't fit in".

*If they just went straight they might go far;  
They are strong and brave and true;  
But they're always tired of the things that are,  
And they want the strange and new.  
He's a rolling stone, and it's bred in the bone;  
He's a man who won't fit in.*

### Slightly Weird

Flight Radar <http://www.flightradar24.com>

Some people like planes and some people just like watching other people. Well, here is good news for both types of people since there's a weird/useful website that allows you to "spy" on every single plane flying right now in any part of the world. All you have to do is click the aircraft and see where it has come from and where it is heading. You can click on an airport to check arrivals and departures.

News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news>

Of course the BBC is the best UK on-line news site. It is not as good as it used to be as they have cut down on the editorial staff, but still good for finding news around the UK and world. However if you want to see what the papers say then the two websites below let you into newspapers everywhere. I like to read the New Zealand Herald as I have a good friend who lives there. You get a real insight into foreign countries. Try out the Moscow Times or the Times of India (don't worry, they are in English).

On the Zen site you can read the Economist or the Socialist Worker for example.

<http://www.thebigproject.co.uk/news/> <http://www.wrx.zen.co.uk/britnews.htm>



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

### Gardening

We have had a good year since September 2014 with a variety of topics covered at our monthly meetings.

They were 'Wildlife Friendly Gardening', 'Poisonous Garden Plants', Sheila Paterson's Garden in France', 'Bacteria and Viruses occasionally found in the Garden' and 'Recycling for the Benefit of the Garden from Cary Jones' to name but a few.

As far as the future is concerned plans are being put in place to have at least two group visits to public gardens during the summer.

These visits are of course in addition to the monthly meetings when we have many discussions about our triumphs and failures in our own gardens.

Nelson Waters

Included for this issue only, as previously mentioned, the Committee Members are:

Rosemary Train  
Chairperson



Loraine Swan  
Vice Chairperson



Anne Hood  
Treasurer



Anne Armstrong  
Membership



Sheila Easton  
Speaker Coordinator



Margaret Dunlop  
Business Secretary



Ken Forrest  
Group Coordinator



Nelson Watters  
Group Coordinator



Jim Allan  
BusyBody



## And Finally

I'm sure, like me, you worry about things that we have no control over. Instead of worrying about them we should perhaps be grateful for the things we are able to do.

### **I Worried** by Mary Oliver

I worried a lot. Will the garden grow, will the rivers flow in the right direction, will the earth turn as it was taught, and if not, how shall I correct it?

Was I right, was I wrong, will I be forgiven. Can I do better?

Will I ever be able to sing? Even the sparrows can do it and I am, well, hopeless.

Is my eyesight fading or am I just imagining it?  
Am I going to get rheumatism, lockjaw, dementia?

Finally, I saw that worrying had come to nothing.  
And I gave it up.  
And I took my old body  
And went out into the morning, and sang.

*Sheila Easton*

Excursion page background  
A KELPIE called JUKE.  
We got to BE inside your head.  
Yes we did.



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.**

Publicity group: Sheila Easton, Nelson Waters, Jim Allan.