

Lanark & District U3A Newsletter

Living
Laughing
Learning



Spring 2018

Issue 12

Chairpersons Report

January and February

U3A Meetings and Groups have been affected somewhat with wintry conditions dictating postponements and a few cancellations. However U3A spirits and determination ensured that compromises were made and that the Show must go on!

Our Burns Extravaganza took place a week late due to inclement weather. Despite some changes, a wonderful afternoon of Burns/ Scottish entertainment was presented to approx. 80 members. My thanks to everyone who participated and to the ladies and gents who helped with the Burns Nibbles.

On date, the February meeting - 'Clydevalley Orchards Cooperative' presented by Committee member, Anne Armstrong and her partner was excellent. It was informative, humorous and inspiring. Their enthusiasm for this worthy project gained members to sign up their support. The sales of their delicious Apple Juice were high.

A most convivial afternoon!

Despite the weather, most groups have been operational and U3A members have been mindful of those who need some support and help to attend. My thanks to all our Good Samaritans.

The Committee continue to meet monthly when we debate and plan strategies in a light-hearted manner. We have a few potential new members which is positive, ensuring fresh ideas and perspectives.

We look forward to Spring and warmer weather which should bring our outdoor activities to the fore. Look out for information on our Annual Excursion to Arran on Wednesday 9th May. If you are interested, please contact Lesley Gair asap.

As always, my thanks to all members who ensure that Lanark & District U3A is thriving in this community.

I wish everyone a Happy Easter and enjoyable Spring Breaks.

Lorraine Swan, Chairperson.

Lanark & District U3A

Our U3A started in 2011 with around 35 members and has proved to be very popular and now has over 190 members.

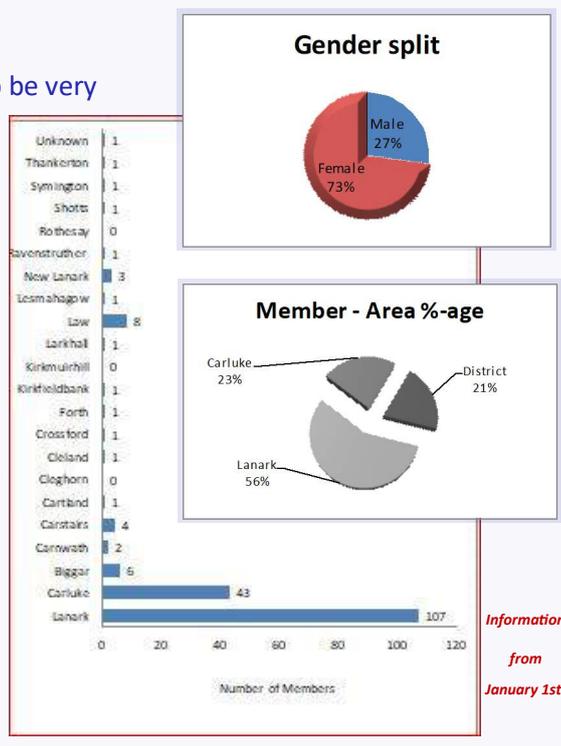
Members come from all across the area and even at one point, Rothesay. The split, between male and female, is close to the National average of 25% to 75%.

Something for everyone.

There are around 30 groups, which run throughout the year and provide a diverse range of activities covering leisure, pleasure, sporting, educational activities, available for members to participate in. The leaders of these are all members, who freely give their time and assistance.

Common interests, joining together, and making friends are all part of the what the U3A is about.

Thanks every one for making our U3A a success.



General Meeting Dates and Speakers

18th April 2018	Ron Harris	‘Views from the Crosses’
16th May 2018	Stuart Anderson	Annual General Meeting followed by ‘Battlefield Bakery’

Note: Speakers and topics may be subject to change.

Representing Our U3A in the Community

Our U3A was again represented at the **Royal Burgh of Lanark, New Year Dinner.**



Several members attended this popular event, which took place in the Cartland Bridge Hotel on Saturday, 13th January. The ‘Burgh Dinner’ was originally intended to be a one off event to celebrate the new millennium but its popularity has resulted in nineteen annual Burgh dinners to date. For the first time, this year’s ‘Burgh Dinner’ was organised by the Lanark Rotary Club, who on this occasion, also used it as an opportunity to raise money for their current local project, which is the refurbishment of Lanark YMCA.

After the dinner, itself, guests were treated to a variety of lively and entertaining speeches and everyone agreed it was a most convivial evening and an excellent way to start 2018.

It may seem a long way off but perhaps you might like to think about attending the 2019 New Year Dinner, which will mark a very special twentieth year milestone for an event which has become a Lanark legacy of the millennium!

Margaret Dunlop

BURNS Extravaganza

As usual our January General Meeting was a Burns Extravaganza. Unfortunately the snow caused us to cancel the event on the 17th but we managed to get the show on the road the following week with almost the same cast.



Jamie Brownlee



David Dickman



Christine O’Neil



Donald McKenzie



Cara Buckingham

Cara from Lanark Primary, a very talented 8yr old, recited a poem. **Jamie**, from Lanark Grammar, did a sterling job filling the hall with bagpipe music. **Stewart** and **David** gave their all, presenting Holy Willie’s Prayer and Tam O’Shanter. **Christine** and **Donald**, assisted by **Mary Perryman** on piano, sang beautifully. Well done to all the performers.



Stewart Houston

The afternoon proved to be a resounding success.

Badminton group

The badminton group continues to meet every Thursday morning from 10 am until 12 noon in the YMCA in Lanark.

There are now thirteen members in total and some even managed to brave the snow and the storms to play during the very severe weather!

Refurbishment work is currently underway in the YMCA but hopefully this should cause minimal disruption.

Siobhan and Emma have been doing a great job of organising and setting up the badminton during my absence.

Fiona MacGregor



“BOOKWORMS”

In September, following the decision of one of the original Lanark and District U3A Book Groups to concentrate on “crime” a breakaway group, “Bookworms” was formed to read all genres.

The group’s criteria of all “genres” have certainly been met in the first few months.

In September the first book we read and discussed was “The Quality of Silence” written by Rosemary Lupton and told of a mother’s and daughter’s quest to uncover a dark secret in the Alaskan Wilderness. From the cold of Alaska we travelled to Nigeria in the late 19th century to read “Things Fall Apart” by Chinua Achebe, a fascinating insight into the changing times of the country. Alan Alda was our next author of choice with “Things I Overheard Whilst Talking to Myself”, which we all agreed left much to be desired of a good read. We much preferred Alan Alda as Hawkeye in “Mash” to his skills as an author!



The final book for 2017 was “Friends, Lovers and Chocolate” by Alexander McCall Smith (best known for “The No 1 Ladies Detective Agency” series of books.) We all found it readable if somewhat confusing and annoying at times!

We started our “reads” for 2018 with “Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine” by Gail Honeyman a debut bestseller and winner of the Costa First Novel Book Award . It had an intriguing story line and we all thoroughly enjoyed this book. We have in fact recommended it to Lanark Library for inclusion in their spring reading list. Our February book was “The Crimson Petal and the White” by Michael Faber. This book took us back from modern day Glasgow in “Eleanor” to Victorian London and the dark side of life. As this newsletter goes to print we will be reading “A big boy did it and ran away” by Christopher Brookmyre, but more about that next time!

Crime Book group.

The U3A **Crime Book Group** meets on the third Tuesday of each month, in Lanark Library, from 2pm until 3.30 pm.

We try to choose our books from the list of library sets available, whenever possible, so in January, we read Tess Gerritson, 'The Apprentice'- pretty gory details and rather dated, we decided.

In February, we read ' Pretty Baby' by Mary Kubika. It had quite an intriguing but entirely unbelievable premise.

Because of these observations, we have gone with a newspaper's list of recommended new crime novels for March and bought ourselves each a copy of Janis Thomas's 'What Remains True', so watch this space for our next instalment of our analysis!



Rosemary Train

SINGING GROUP.

The group is new and started on 26th January 2018 with 15 members attending. Our Musical Leader is Rebecca Keay, and we began singing together initially in unison, songs such as Caledonia, Lean on Me and The Trolley Song. However by February, we were able to sing in 4 part harmony and are currently working on songs from the musical The Lion King.



The group members enjoy singing together in a relaxed atmosphere in The Jerviswood Hall within the Memorial Hall every fortnight on a Friday from 3pm until 4.15pm.

Rebecca is great to work with and she brings out the best vocally in our singing group!! Although there is no pressure on group Members to perform, we may in the future sing at one of the U3A monthly meetings. So watch this space!!

Helen Davidson a member of the group, has kindly agreed to be the Deputy Group Leader in my absence. We would like to thank her for taking up this role.

Making music in any form is relaxing and singing improves mental alertness, improves breathing, posture and mind-set as well as other benefits. While singing alone is good, singing with others can be even better.



Let's Sing Together, harmonise and socialise. Come and join us!!

For further information contact **Sandra Chalmers** Singing Group Leader. [e mail: sandra.chalmers037@gmail.com](mailto:sandra.chalmers037@gmail.com)

U3A Pub Lunch and Discussion Group Jan/Feb 2018

The group met in the customary venue, the Crown Inn in Lanark, on Friday 12th January, when "Equality" was the topic of the month. In the absence of the Group Leader on holiday, former Leader, Ken Forrest, took the chair as 16 members turned out for the first discussion of 2018.

February saw us debating "Philanthropy" and whether there were enough of these wealthy individuals still around willing to share their wealth for the common good. We also looked back at Victorian times when hospitals and libraries were built through the largesse of pecunious individuals, rather than by local or national authorities. 19 members attended.

Snow prevented us meeting on 1st March, so we look forward to the April meeting (6th) when the subject will be "Tourism".

Ken Liddell (Group Leader)



LUNCH

Our January get together was at Lanark Golf Course where Paul as usual put on a lovely lunch for us. We decided to leave a bit earlier than usual when the snow started to come down quite heavily.

The snow put paid to our February lunch as Motherwell College had to cancel our visit. They, rightly, decided to tell their staff not to try to come in that day.

We hope to go to the College sometime soon.

JANETTE RANKIN

UKULELE group

Our Ukulele group started on the 31st January with a very pleasing turnout of 10 members armed with our new ukuleles, loads of enthusiasm and absolutely no previous knowledge.



The first session was in Fiona's beautiful conservatory, a perfect venue with wonderful views of the winter wonderland, yes folks it was snowing really heavily and I don't think it has stopped since! Our tutor Ian was very patient and assured us all that we would be able to strum a few tunes with a little study and practice .

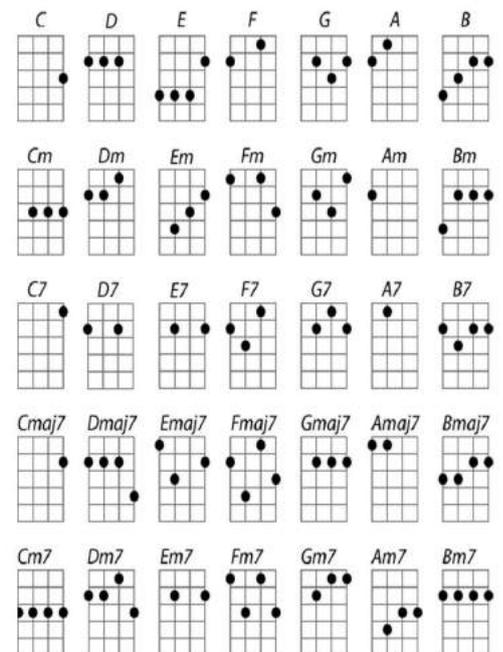
I am pleased to report that yes, we are progressing , we have all learnt to play some basic chords and basic strums and it sounds quite ok when we play along together, not quite ready for the Albert hall but everyone seems to enjoy what we are doing.

We have just finished our third lesson and yes you've guessed it , snowing heavily again but with such a dedicated group we still managed to meet up despite the horrendous road conditions and I would like to thank everyone for their determination, especially Ian who had to travel from Biggar.

The next formal lesson will be in April because of holidays etc., but some of the group will hold informal sessions in between. We all look forward to progressing on this wonderful fun instrument and who knows maybe in the future we can put a few favourite tunes together and surprise a few people! I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our members, the very kind members that have let us use their homes and our tutor Ian Murray for his patience and dedication.

Emma Dawson

UKULELE CHORDS



Humour Group

January's Meeting took a different format when we met for Brunch and shared funny stories/ jokes.

Lanark's well known comedian and Director of Lanark Panto - Frank Gunning - joined us.

He entertained us with funny stories and poems.

All the members, inspired by Frank's enthusiasm, shared their own humorous stories.

It was a most convivial morning and the Brunch was excellent

In February we were back in the Clydesdale. Patricia was our Host. We all thoroughly enjoyed watching her choice of comedian, Dave Allan.

Laughter ensued for the whole session which meant that we left with our spirits raised!



The Humour Group next meets on Tuesday, 20th March at 10.15am in the Clydesdale. Christine L. Is our Host.

All are welcome to join us.

Remember — Live, Learn, LAUGH

Lorraine Swan

Photography

In January the group went to Calderglen Country Park. The weather was cold but sunny which was good for photographs. 5 group members attended on the day. We set off to the walkway by the river which was very picturesque and we took some photographs at the timber bridge which we had to cross. We then continued along the pathway and came across a waterfall which was frozen and was ideal for the group to stop and take photographs of same. We then headed back to the cafe for the all important coffee and discussion!! Then we went to the Hothouse where we took photographs of exotic plants, followed by a walk around the grounds to see the wildlife sanctuary.



February saw the group at the Kelpies.



The weather was dry but cold and overcast, not the best for taking photographs! 5 members attended on the day.

We took photographs of the Kelpies from various angles and from the nearby Forth & Clyde canal. Following some all important refreshments, we then ventured back out to take photographs of the picturesque coloured sheds at the edge of the canal.



The group enjoyed both these outings and are hopefully looking forward to more outings in the future, particularly when the weather improves!

If anyone is interested in joining the Photography Group please contact derekchalmers@hotmail.co.uk

Gardening Group

The 'F' – word!!

Our winter activities have been FULL of FUN and FRIENDLINESS; FLOWERS in abundance as we shared our gardening passions and rejoiced in the FIRST snowdrops.

Our programme is FLEXIBLE and we invited FELLOW U3A members who sell second-hand books to bring in gardening books FOR us to look at.

The FUTURE looks bright and includes a 'Gardeners' Question Time' with invited experts and plans to visit local nurseries and gardens. FURTHER afield we're visiting New Hopetoun Gardens in West Lothian for a talk with 'Choosing & Arranging Your Plants' and 'Exploring Carefree Gardening' as FOCAL points. Other visits will FOLLOW.

We'll be having a FIELD-DAY when we join together for a social afternoon in a member's garden in the summer.

We enjoy the FELLOWSHIP of the Group. We go with the FLOW and most of the time everything is FREE!

Christine Robbins

Walking Group

In January we met for our traditional New Year walk round Lanark Loch.

February saw us brave the cold at Mauldslie – some of us followed the Clyde walkway to Cardies Bridge and back, the more intrepid navigated their way uphill to Law and back. We met for lunch at Gouldings.



We walk every month on the first Wednesday, whatever the weather. Usually there are two walks to choose from. Add your name to the email list by emailing a4rrmstrong@yahoo.co.uk – you don't have to attend every walk, just the ones you want.

Anne Armstrong

SCRABBLE GROUP (CARLUKE)

- S**crabble group
- C**ontinues to meet
- R**egularly every week, with a group of 6-8 members
- A**ttending. Midway through the session we
- B**reak for a
- B**lether and refreshments
- L**eaving everyone
- E**nergised for the rest of the afternoon!



Subject: Theatre Group

We were entertained and suitably impressed by Shine's 'Sister Act' at Motherwell Concert Hall early in January. This company continues to impress with its high quality and professional performances. It was professional, vibrant and fun! The youngsters oozed enthusiasm and talent. Roll on Titanic in March!

In contrast, our next Theatre Trip was to 'Mozart by Candlelight' at Lanark Memorial Hall. We all enjoyed this beautiful classical performance. All performers impressed and the music took us on a journey of Mozart's wonderful operas and more!

Some of us enjoyed a delicious pre - theatre meal at The Woodpecker.

Remember that your suggestions for Theatre Trips are always welcome

The World's Hardest Riddle

Some light relief.

*I turn polar bears white
and I will make you cry.
I make guys have to pee
and girls comb their hair.
I make celebrities look stupid
and normal people look like celebrities.
I turn pancakes brown
and make your champagne bubble.
If you squeeze me, I'll pop.
If you look at me, you'll pop.
Can you guess the riddle?*

*97% of Harvard graduates cannot figure
this riddle out, but 84% of kindergarten
students were able to figure this out in 6
minutes or less.*

Answer below.

ITS YOUR NEWSLETTER — YES it is your newsletter !!!

Good newsletters normally have articles from members as well as reports of what has been going on in the groups. Some have letters from members.

If you have anything to say, either a letter or an article please let me know. You may have a story to tell us about or an anecdote from your favourite holiday, or an amusing story!

Just put it in an email and send it to me.

Nelson Waters.

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 Nelson Waters at nelsonwaters@btinternet.com

Thanks to everyone who contributed.

Publicity group — Nelson Waters, Irene McDougall, Jan McNulty and Jim Allan.