



Newsletter – September 2018

Message from your New Chair

Very best wishes to all our members at the start of another U3A year. I hope you all had a good summer and were able to enjoy the rarity of really hot weather in Scotland! My sympathies to those of you who spent lots of money on holidays to Spain etc. only to find that it was actually hotter in Glasgow and Aberdeen!

I was honoured to be elected as your Chair at the recent AGM in East Kilbride in June. Your committee members are as detailed below. Iain McDonald was elected from the floor after raising the point that there were too few men standing for election to U3A committees. The immediate response from delegates was a seconded proposal, followed by a unanimous vote in favour of him joining the committee. Just goes to prove that your old granny was right when she warned you "to be careful what you wish for!"

Our next Scottish Assembly is to be held at the Queen's Hotel, Dundee on October 11th; the provisional programme is available from your Secretary. We are currently seeking venues for an Assembly in March or end of February and also for the AGM in June 2019. Please do contact me if you feel that you have a suitable venue available and/or if you have any requests or ideas for topics, speakers, workshops etc.

I hope you have a very successful year and I look forward to meeting with some of you at future Assemblies and conferences.

Kath Payne, Chair U3A in Scotland

Your Committee

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| Chair | Kath Payne | Four Border Abbeys U3A |
| Vice Chair | Susan Tester | Forth Valley U3A |
| Secretary | Linda Clark | Inverness & Black Isle U3A |
| Treasurer | Mike Still | Four Border Abbeys U3A |
| Committee | Anne Walsh | West Lothian U3A |
| Committee | Janet Holland | Bearsden & Milngavie U3A |
| Committee | Iain McDonald | Three Brethren U3A |

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Helensburgh and District U3A

The Inaugural Meeting on the 3rd of July saw over 120 retired and semi-retired members of the community flock to Helensburgh Parish Church, to join up or to find out more about participation in the Interest Groups. Malcolm Brown, the Chairman said: "It was beyond our expectations with more than 70 people signing up for membership of 40 very varied Interest Groups. It was a brilliant day".

Our Monthly Meetings will take place on the first Monday in the month from 2.00 to 4.00 pm, in Helensburgh Parish Church Halls. The first meeting was on the 6th of August when the speaker was Gill Aitkenhead on "The Life and Laughs of the Vice Lord Lieutenant".

Everyone will be made very welcome at all monthly meetings.

Malcolm Brown

From the Retiring Chair

The yearly report from the Chair is an opportunity to look back and it has been quite a year. Since the AGM in 2017, in addition to the three new U3As mentioned in the Assembly and AGM report there are three more in the pipeline: Helensburgh, Kinross-shire and Duns. The coming months will see these three established as full members.

Summer School 2018 again was held in Dundee in August but more about that later.

I attended the National Conference in Nottingham in August 2017 and found that very interesting and, just like at our Assemblies, I think the most valuable part was talking to representatives from all over the UK.

Our Assemblies this past year have been in Lanark and Kelso. We have had some very interesting speakers and good turnout of U3As, although we can always do with more attending these Assemblies.

I attended two Network meetings in London with the Chairs of Regions and Networks from all over the UK and listened as to how things were organised in their areas. Ed Link, our Trustee for Scotland, keeps telling us that Scotland is the best organised, but I think he might be a wee bit prejudiced.

I was invited to give a talk about the U3A at The Conference of Retired Unison members held in Glasgow. During my talk I asked how many people had heard of the U3A and out of around a hundred members only about 15 had heard of the U3A and only one was a member. **How can we get the word out?**

In the interests of succession planning I retired at the AGM after two years' service as Chair. However, I am not disappearing as I am still a Trust Volunteer for starting new U3As and for helping to organise Induction Workshops for new and aspiring committee members.

I have enjoyed working with the Committee who have been very supportive and I know that the new Chair will have the same support from the Committee members and also from Ed Link.

Pat Garland, Past Chair, U3A in Scotland

U3A in Scotland Assembly and AGM – 26th June 2018

On one of the hottest and sunniest days of the year, 53 delegates representing 27 Member U3As gathered in East Kilbride Arts Centre. Pat Garland, Chair U3A in Scotland, and Val Yaneske, Chair East Kilbride U3A, welcomed everyone. We were delighted to welcome back to Scotland Pam Jones, Chairman of the Third Age Trust, who began the morning session by presenting Certificates of Membership to delegates from our three new U3As:

- * Kathy O'Donnell, Chair - Paisley and District;
- * Ed Stanton, Chair - Brechin and District;
- * Isobel Kieran, Membership Secretary - Glasgow West End.



Pam then continued to talk about what had been achieved during her term of office, which was soon coming to an end. There are now four paid managers in National Office who are coping with the recent deluge of new legislation; a consultation exercise with all members had led to a change in the constitution; and U3A Plus has been set up. She stressed the need to raise the profile of U3A in the outside world and to this end she announced that staff from National Office along with various Regional Trustees and representatives would be attending a reception in the Palace of Westminster in July when they would have the opportunity to promote the benefits that U3A made to older members of society and hence to society in general. In conclusion Pam assured her audience that she would continue to work as an ambassador to an organisation that had given her so much over the last twenty years.

Our second speaker was Maria Pabolazo-Lacambra from the Scottish Government's Equality Unit who spoke on "A Connected Scotland, a National Social Isolation and Loneliness Strategy". A study in 2015 had found social isolation to be a major problem in Scotland and this had led to the Government developing a draft strategy (published earlier this year) to address this issue. Three main themes emerged from consultations held from January to April 2018 - the need to create vibrant communities; transport; and health and wellbeing. The priorities of the strategy are empowering communities to lead (in which U3As have a major role to play) and ensuring that the Government plays its part. The final strategy is due to be published by the end of this year. The full presentation and contact details can be found by following the links on U3A in Scotland web site.

As always the lunch break provided the opportunity for delegates to socialise and share U3A experiences with many taking the opportunity to enjoy some sunshine in the outside patio areas and garden.

The AGM followed with the usual reports from the Chair and Treasurer. Pat Garland told delegates that she was stepping down after only 2 years to allow for succession planning - but she was NOT retiring! Kath Payne was elected as Chair. Details of the full Committee can be found on page 1.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 3 p.m.

Summer School 21st – 23rd August 2018

The 2018 Summer School was considered a great success by the 51 delegates who attended from 19 member U3As. The event was held in the West Park Conference Centre, Dundee, an ideal venue as the accommodation, meeting rooms, dining room and bar were all situated close together.

Each delegate had chosen one of four topics. The American History group was led by tutor Jim Ashwood from Dundee U3A. The sessions covered the Civil Rights movement in the United States from the end of the American Civil War in 1865 to the present day. The Craft group went to Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA) Centre for sessions led by DCA staff and showed the finished products of their work at the final session (*pictured*). The Ecology topic, led by Bob Batty from Oban U3A, was focused on the oceans and marine environment and included many impressive statistics. The Geology topic was enthusiastically led by Alison Tymon from East Berwickshire U3A, with a combination of presentations and participative practical work.

The social side of the Summer School was much enjoyed by delegates who appreciated the opportunity to meet and socialise with people from other U3As during refreshment breaks, meal times, drinks in the bar and free time. After dinner on Tuesday there was an entertaining Quiz. On Wednesday evening the celebration dinner was attended by the Lord Provost of Dundee, Ian Borthwick and his wife; the after dinner musical entertainment was provided by a group of talented young musicians from St Paul's RC Academy, Dundee. A final session of feedback for all delegates was held on Thursday morning when participants reported back from the topic groups and on their overall enjoyment of the event. The Summer School was considered very well organised by Pat Garland of Dundee U3A and former Chair of U3A in Scotland, assisted by members of Dundee U3A and by Kath Payne, Chair of U3A in Scotland. As delegates went home they were already looking forward to the next Summer School, planned for 2020.



Tour of the Scottish Parliament

The East Lothian U3A Archaeology, History & Genealogy Group went on a tour of the Scottish Parliament on 4 June 2018. The Tour was conducted by Iain Gray, MSP.

Some historical facts:

On September 14 1128, David I, King of Scotland, son of Queen Margaret of Scotland, was hunting beneath a rocky outcrop when the stag he was pursuing turned and fought. The King was thrown from his horse, landing at the stag's hooves. To protect himself the King lunged for the beast's antlers but instead grasped a crucifix that had miraculously appeared on its head. The stag retreated, leaving the King clutching the cross. That night a voice in a dream told the King to build an Abbey on the site. King David's Abbey ruins sit beside The Royal Palace of Holyrood House where on 9 March 1566, Mary Queen of Scots saw her jealous husband stab her lover to death.

Building commenced on the Scottish Parliament in 1999 with the demolition of The Scottish & Newcastle Brewery Headquarters. The new Parliament was the first in Scotland in 300 years. There was an international compilation of the design and 12 designs were selected in 1998. Five of the final designs were put on public display in June 1998. Enric Miralles, a Catalan Architect, produced the most popular design; this was chosen on 6 July 1998. Enric Miralles had climbed Arthur's seat and looked down on the Scottish & Newcastle site and this where his design of The Scottish Parliament was born. Enric Miralles died aged 45 in 2000 of a brain tumour.

Irene Hopkins, East Lothian U3A Archaeology, History & Genealogy Group

Stewartry U3A Beach Clean

Our Stewartry U3A area hugs the coastline of both the Solway and Irish Sea. When the problem of 'Marine Litter' and its devastating effect on wildlife was highlighted we realised we were, geographically, perfectly situated to do something about it. Over 40 members signed up to the group within a couple of days of its announcement, which showed their concern and commitment.

We meet every two months and depending on tides, vary the beaches across our area. We clean for two hours and then socialize over a pub lunch or picnic. Local councils would lend us equipment but most of our members are very supportive and come armed with their own. However our U3A has purchased a few litter pickers as spares.



What surprised us was how the nature of the marine litter varied from beach to beach. Recently at Carsethorn, we collected over 60 bags – mainly fishing wire and rope tangled in seaweed! The 'Steamboat Inn' offered us all a free drink for our efforts. It was nice to be appreciated.

Not all members can attend every beach clean event but we usually get an excellent turnout and we feel we have made a difference however small.

Stewartry U3A

Elgin U3A at Motorfun

Elgin and District U3A have held several events this year to increase awareness of the U3A organization, its roles and objectives.

By far the most successful was our stand at the 'Motorfun' afternoon held in Cooper Park in Elgin in June: the excellent weather helped draw a large crowd which also meant our wee stand had many visitors. It was good to meet and share experiences with members from other U3A teams as well as meet some potential members for our own U3A.



Thanks go to Elgin Rotary Club whose planning of the day was seamless, and to our U3A helpers who gave up their Sunday to fly the flag.

Rob Goodall, Elgin U3A

Lenzie U3A - What about a Limerick group?

Probably every U3A has at least one Poetry Group or Reading Group. Let me say at once that I have no problems with this, but I find it difficult to concentrate on long periods of reading as a self-entertainment, and poetry is lovely in itself, but does not exercise my creative brain cells. By their very nature, poetry or novels do not always tickle the funny-bone.

Now, limericks are different. By their nature, they are short (useful within the timespan of one or two hour meetings), require creativity in rhyme and rhythm (useful for inputs for several people), and achieve their greatest effect by humour after only five lines. The latter, especially, fulfils one of the triumvirate of the U3A mission statements, where Laughter is important.

To help us, we have a list of rhyming words, and also rhymes for the names of our Group members. We set ourselves the task of writing 100 limericks, and printing them, perhaps for sale, for a charity to be decided by members. We currently have over 80 limericks, so are well on our way to our goal.

The following are a couple I wrote for last year's Christmas lunch, but I have to say, the best ones come from where we take it in turn to produce a line.....Great fun!

*Tinsel, baubles, and too much to eat.
To pay for it all is some feat
Bad TV, folks snoring
Can end up quite boring
Makes you just want to sit down and greet!*

*But we know there's much more than this
Under the mistletoe you might get a kiss!
Spending time with your pals,
Be they old guys or gals,
Can turn out a time of pure bliss.....*

Harry Monroe, Lenzie U3A

To all who sent in articles for the newsletter

There was an abundance of articles and any we haven't used are saved for the next Newsletter, unless they would be out of date by then.

All U3As please keep the contributions coming!

U3A members help to launch Hearing Access Protocol

Members of Forth Valley U3A and Callander U3A have played a key part in the launch of a new Hearing Access Protocol that aims to make meetings and events less stressful and frustrating for people with hearing loss. Launched on 2 August by Dunblane-based Ideas for Ears, the Hearing Access Protocol sets out how meetings and events should be run so they can be heard or followed by everyone, whatever their hearing ability. It provides details of good practice that everyone can benefit from and the specific adjustments that some people may additionally require.

Alan Blue, member of Forth Valley U3A, comments: “As someone who has hearing difficulties, I have experienced first-hand how it feels not to be able to follow a meeting because I have missed what someone said. The Hearing Access Protocol is a brilliant resource that has long been needed.” Forth Valley U3A is now developing a project to promote awareness and use of the Hearing Access Protocol. Alan adds: “I would love to see all U3As adopt the protocol. The guidance it offers can assist the U3A to become more accessible and inclusive and that is definitely a goal that we are all aiming for.”

Alan Blue, Forth Valley U3A

Cupar U3A - Dumfriesshire Walking Expedition

Warm sunshine on Tuesday 19th July made the drive south from Fife a pleasure as the countryside glowed in Autumn colours. Our accommodation at The Schoolhouse was very well equipped with a large kitchen, a comfortable sitting room with a wood burning stove, plenty hot water and places to dry off outerwear.

Wednesday came in with grey gloomy skies and the promise of rain but the prospect of exploring new country in the Drumlanrig Castle Estate by the River Nith was exciting. Through old majestic woodland a network of winding paths and cycle tracks wound their ways offering occasional views of river and hills beyond, although wildlife spotting brought meagre rewards. Poor weather and drizzle continued until Drumlanrig was reached, the Kitchen Cafe located, and then seven damp bodies were able to appreciate the welcome rest surrounded by copper pans and other antiques whilst devouring cream teas.

The forecast for Thursday was more encouraging. Our intention was to walk up to the red sandstone Striding Arches built on the hilltops around Cairnhead by sculptor Andy Goldsworthy as a monument to the Scottish people and the travels they have made around the world. The first arch projected out the side of an old byre at the foot of the valley then further up the track and hill path the second reared up atop Colt Hill. Two other arches can be seen from here and the views around were clear and far-reaching with a glimmer of the Solway in the distance to the SW. After visiting the third arch, coffee and mouth watering cakes at Moniave revived us but didn't prevent us enjoying dinner at the Steamboat Inn.

Next day we visited The Garden of Cosmic Speculation near Holywood and the River Nith before lunch to round off a very successful few days.



Jane Kerr, Cupar U3A

