

NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2024

Don't miss the next General meeting



Inverness & Cromarty Firth
Green Free Port

CONVENOR'S CHAT

As we head into a new month and new season for u3a, I'd like to reflect on the wonderful activities and learning experiences we've shared recently. It's been great to see so many involved in the diverse range of groups, from walking to play reading. The enthusiasm and fun you bring to sessions reminds me why u3a is such a special place for lifelong learning.

It was so good to see so many group leaders at the coffee morning and everyone having great craic all morning, not to mention new faces coming to find out what we get up to. I'd like to extend a special thank you to all the interest group leaders who give up their time and energy to make all our sessions possible. We are always looking for ways to improve so if you have ideas or suggestions for new groups or activities, please don't hesitate to reach out. At the moment we are trying to start up a Pickleball group so watch out for the news on that. Remember you don't have to be an expert on a subject just be willing to encourage others and arrange the meetings and there is lots of support from the committee.

I encourage you all to take part in something new this month—whether it's a trip to the theatre, or cinema, through the WhatsApp group, or simply attending a group you haven't tried before. It's a great way to broaden your horizons and meet new people and don't forget being part of our committee is also a great option and, believe it or not, great fun.

Remember, U3A is all about exploring interests, sharing knowledge, and building connections. Whether you've been with us for years or are a new member, there's always something to discover, and I hope you'll make the most of the opportunities on offer.

Jenny Brogden ~ Convenor

General Meetings

Our General Meetings are open to all, so please come along and bring a friend. We meet on the third Thursday of the month at 2PM, in the Castle Street Church Hall.

We are planning our speaker list for next year and hope to bring you some interesting and entertaining talks. In the meantime, we have Calum Macpherson from The Cromarty Firth Green Freeport speaking to us on **17th October** and Iona Nocol from The Munloch Animal Aid on **21st November**.

Committee members

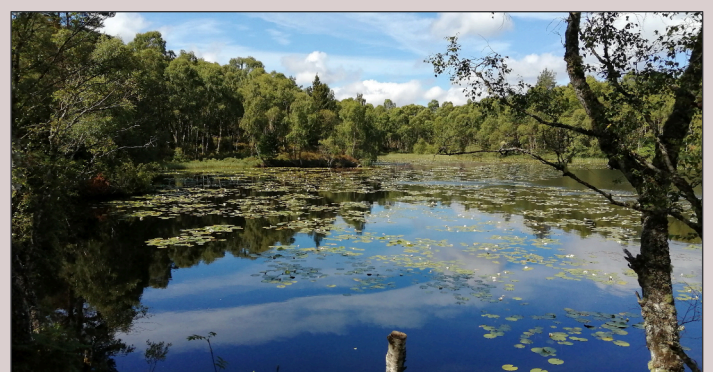
Jenny Brogden – Convenor
 Jeanie Lloyd – Secretary
 Louise James – Treasurer
 Kim Miller – Membership Secretary
 Marion Wyatt – Group Co-ordinator
 Fiona Mackenzie – Media Co-ordinator

Our December meeting, will be a bit different this year, we will be having a fun Scotland Quiz. We hope as many of you will come along and try your luck. There will be refreshments, and we hope it will turn out to be a good social event to round of the year.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

WALKING GROUP

Our walking group has continued to meet all summer, amongst our local (low) hills, lochs and sea shore. Upland routes included the upper Brahan estate, using the old Contin Road, and a visit to Mount Eagle. Lochs visited included secluded Loch Morie, west of Alness and, above Strathpeffer, the An Dubh Lochan, noted for water lilies (photo 1), and, on our visit, damselflies (photo2). Bluebells were on view on a walk on Contin Island. The shoreline was visited during some other walks - at the Yankee pier, Alness, at the River Conon estuary, reached via the Peffery canal, at Redcastle, and at Rosemarkie beach. Here a visit to the Fairy Glen was combined with a beachside stroll to the "Tinkers Cave" (photo 3). We have been lucky with the weather this unsettled summer - the walkers in photo 3 are sheltering from the sun, not the rain!



NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

PLAY READING



Lord what fools these mortals be! Puck Act 3.

Mortals we may be but not too foolish to read another of Shakespeare's plays. After a break over July and August we returned with a reading of A Midsummer Night's Dream. The dreams and schemes of the mortal and fairy worlds were read with much enthusiasm and confidence.

We now have just five play reading sessions left in 2024. The aim will be to explore farce, something a little more serious and then a panto with which to celebrate the end of the year.

Susan Cooper



POETRY

We continue to meet monthly and read out some poems that we have selected on a particular topic. A discussion ensues which is also fun and enjoyable. Our chosen topics recently have been courage and trees. Interestingly we rarely choose the same poem but we can have our favourite poets. Norman MacCaig, Clive James, Wendell Berry, Robert Frost, Eugene Montale, Ruskin Bond, Oliver Goldsmith, T.S Eliott and Walter de la Mare all feature this month.

All welcome, we meet at the Conon Hotel.



CALLIGRAPHY

Why Calligraphy? It's *still* used today, for many different purposes - from personal use as a relaxing hobby and artistic expression, to commercial purposes, interesting posters, invitations, Christmas cards, and much more. And with the coming of fancy fonts on your computer, it's unquestionably a craft that is losing traction in the modern world. If you would like to give it a try, please get in touch - we can help you get started. As to our small group - we continue to work on our lettering skills. We all know we should practise more between our sessions in the library, but, well, it's hard to get motivated sometimes! We've made our library meetings last an hour and a half now, so that we have at least that quiet time when we can concentrate, and learn from each other.

Gordon

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

The Practising Art group is going well.

Members are most often working on their own projects and experimenting with new media.

There's still scope for tutorials when requested.

Anyone with an interest in trying out their art abilities is most welcome.

Contact Terri if you fancy joining us

PRACTISING ART

GOLF

Although the Golf Group met throughout the holidays, they were somewhat depleted, due to the rain. However, Liz was able to snap a few stalwarts on the putting green, between showers!



HISTORY

We are continuing to explore historical themes and entities. This leads to some lively discussions, rabbit holes and signposts to more topics.

Personal interests and some family history have also been included. There really is no limit to our concept of a historical subject.

Recently we have looked at travel, diseases and food. Oatmeal essential although not exclusively Scottish history. We take a world view.

All welcome, we meet at the Conon Hotel.

<https://dingwall.u3asite.uk/>

Our New(ish) Website

Have you checked it out yet?

You can find out more about all our groups and who to contact about any you are interested in.

There is a contacts page too, if you would like to contact any of the committee

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

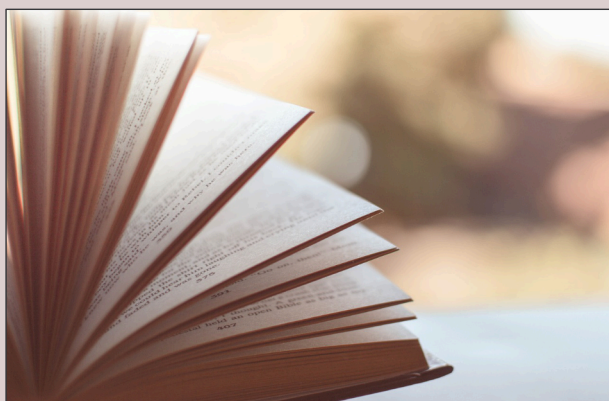
CRAFT

Everyone brings a different craft to our group sessions, we enjoy doing our own thing, while chatting. Babs has been busy making a crochet seat pad made of plastic bags useful for a chilly metal bench in the garden. She found a use for all those charity bags that we get stuffed through our letterboxes.

To make the 'plarn' (plastic yarn) cut the bags across so that each strip opens into a circle then link together as we do to join rubber bands and roll into a ball ready to use.

A 7mm metal hook is suggested and the stitches are all UK Trebles.

Babs is also a keen gardener and as Autumn sets in and the temperature drops outside it is time to bring in her tender plants for protection. Pictured is a little collection of Pelargoniums, Kalanchoes and Begonia Rex, with one of her seat pads displayed at the front



And Fiona finally finished her Christmas Quilt, that she started LAST YEAR!!

BOOK GROUP

A band of readers (5-8 of us) continue to meet on the 4th Thursday of the month where we exchange our opinions on the chosen book.

Over the summer we ploughed our way through *The House of Doors* - (Tan Twan Eng - set in Malaysia), *Days Without End* - (Sebastian Barry - set during the American Indian and Civil Wars), *Erebus* - (Michael Palin - fascinated us with the life of a ship that disappeared...) *Unravelling Oliver* - (Liz Nugent's disturbing tale set in Ireland and France), *Orkney* - (Amy Sackville - yes, set in Orkney but perhaps partly in a mythical realm). Whew!

Now, for October, we start in Chile then on to California during the gold rush, with *Daughter of Fortune* (Isobel Allende). We then return to Scotland in November with *Music in the Dark* by Sally Magnusson.

Contact Louise if you would like to join us.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

CURRENT AFFAIRS

This new venture met for the first time in September where we discussed how the group should run.

We will meet at 2pm on the third Monday of the month in the Dingwall Community Library where we can use the big table by the windows and don't have to keep our voices down!

What will we discuss? It's up to participants to bring along their ideas. Nothing is completely off the table (to start with at least) but we do have to be ready to accept other points of view!

Come along on Monday October 21st at 2pm and let's see how it goes.



Did you see the boards in the library?



Marion & Fiona busy at work in the library.

GEOLOGY FOR BEGINNERS

Terri is starting a new group for beginners

Fundamentals of Geology

The group will meet on the fourth Monday of each month 2pm to 4pm starting on 28th October in the library, initially

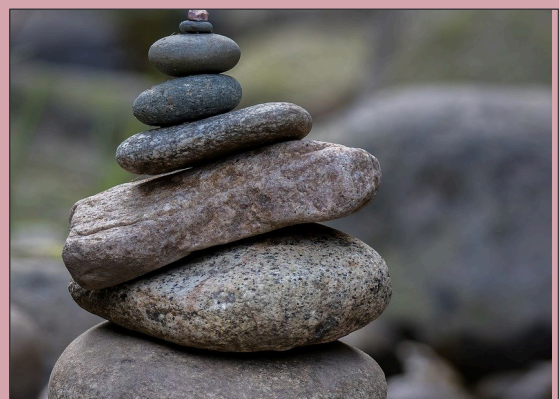
This is a short introductory course to geology over about 8 sessions (depending on participants). No previous knowledge needed.

We will look at rock samples that help to demonstrate the fundamental concepts of geology. We'll learn how to read the story that every rock contains if only we can find it.

Why are there so many different types of rocks? How do mountains grow and wear away? How do scientists know what the world was like millions of years ago?

These are just some of the questions we'll try to answer. There will be two or three short outings to look at rock exposures in the local area.

Please contact Terri for more details



NEWS

PICKLEBALL

Pickleball is a relatively new ball sport in the UK. It fosters mobility, fitness and good health. It can be competitive and is always fun and sociable. It is often described as a cross between badminton, tennis and table tennis. We will be playing indoors on a badminton court.

Players hit a light plastic ball across a net which is similar in height to a tennis net using lightweight "paddles" roughly double the size of table tennis bats. It is easy to learn and provides low-impact exercise, improves balance and flexibility, and nurtures social connection, offering a holistic approach to well-being.

If you are interested in joining a Taster Session please email Pauline Graham indicating which days of the week are best for you.

Paddles (bats) and balls will be provided. Players will need to wear suitable indoor trainers and sports clothing/clothing that allows good mobility. If you have any questions please contact Pauline.

Black Isle Gathering

Saturday October 19th

10am - 4.0pm

**Black Isle Leisure Centre
Fortrose**



**Come and enjoy all things Black Isle
crafts, arts, organisations,
activities, great food and music**

Browse, Brunch, Buy and Blether

www.spanglefish.com/blackislegathering

DONT FORGET THE BLACK ISLE GATHERING

Kim and Louise will be there on the U3A Dingwall & District stand.

Come along and say hello

LINE DANCING



Tuesday 15th october at 10:30 in The Legion Hall, Dingwall.

Some of our members attend a Line Dancing Class run by Fiona Books.

They are having a coffee morning in aid of the Pancreatic Cancer Charity.

Some dancing will be involved and you can join in too.

Come along and have some fun, while supporting charity

The table below shows all the different groups and when they meet up.
 If you would like more details of any of the groups, please check out the website.

GROUP	WHEN	
Board Games	Friday p.m.	1 st & 3 rd Friday of month
Book Group	Thursday p.m.	4 th Thursday of month
Calligraphy	Monday a.m.	1 st & 3 rd Monday of month
Crafts	Wednesday a.m.	1 st & 3 rd Wednesday of month
Coffee/Lunch Club	TBA	Monthly
Creative Writing	Thursday p.m.	1 st Thursday of month
Current Affairs	Monday p.m.	3 rd Monday of month
French Conversation	Tuesday p.m.	Weekly
Golf	Tuesday a.m.	Alternative Tuesdays*
Geology for Beginners	Monday p.m.	4 th Monday of month
German Conversation	Thursday a.m.	Weekly
History	Thursday p.m.	2 nd Thursday of month
Play Reading	Wednesday p.m.	2 nd & 4 th Wednesdays of month
Poetry	Wednesday p.m.	1 st Wednesday of month
Practising Art	Monday p.m.	1 st Monday of month
Psychology	Tuesday p.m.	3 rd Tuesday of month
Theatre & Cinema Group	WhatsApp group	
Walking Group	Tuesday a.m.	Alternative Tuesdays*

*Golf & Walking groups alternate with one another. Please contact Mel (golf) or Andrew (walking) to check when they are happening

THANKS

To Babs, Liz and Andrew for the photographs, and all the Group Leaders who contributed to this newsletter