

# NEWSLETTER WINTER 2024/5

**HAPPY NEW YEAR**

**AND HERE'S TO ANOTHER GREAT U3A YEAR**

## CONVENOR'S CHAT

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2025, a belated Happy New Year and I hope you all had a great Burns Night.

January is always a difficult month to get through with the dark mornings and evenings not to mention the weather which has done its best this year already!!! I hope no one suffered in the big storm.

Many of you will know Susan Cooper so please congratulate her for being brave enough to join the committee. Don't forget if you are interested in joining the committee you will be very welcome and it is fun as well helping to keep everything moving forward.

A big thank you to all our interest group leaders and members who are keeping things buzzing and people involved over this winter period. It's fantastic to see so much energy and enthusiasm despite the weather and time of year – it really makes our u3a special. Don't forget, if you've got ideas for new activities or just want to share something exciting, we'd love to hear from you. I am hoping to get the coffee and lunch club going again so do let me know if you are interested so I can start to book interesting places to go, to not only enjoy the food, but have a good natter. We will also be organising dates and venues for the Coffee mornings so watch out for the information.

Let's keep the good vibes going and make the next few months even more fun and interesting!

Jenny Brogden - Convenor

### General Meetings

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month. 2pm.  
Castle Street Church Hall

**Topics to be covered:**

20<sup>th</sup> February: Munloch Animal Aid  
20<sup>th</sup> March: Eden Court  
17<sup>th</sup> April: Crofters' Commission  
15<sup>th</sup> May: Inverness Castle

### 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  
Susan Cooper – Member

# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

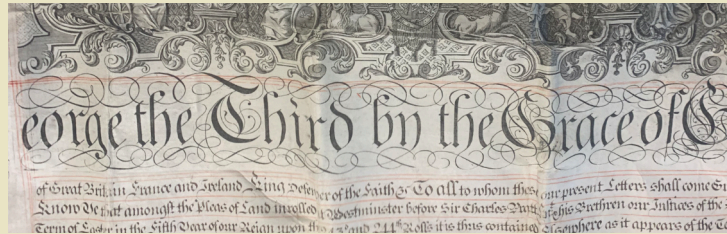
## HISTORY

History was thwarted by snow last month but an open topic meeting will follow.

Looking at different areas which might be of interest. The group is always open to suggestions for discussion or even future projects.

## CALLIGRAPHY

We continue to meet in the library at 10am on the 1st and 3rd Monday. Just before Christmas, Fiona brought in a piece of writing dated from the 1760s. We spent quite a lot of time deciphering the wording as so many letters were written differently then. However, it was amazing to see it and marvel at the penmanship. It sparked a discussion about historical documents and the evolution of the English language.

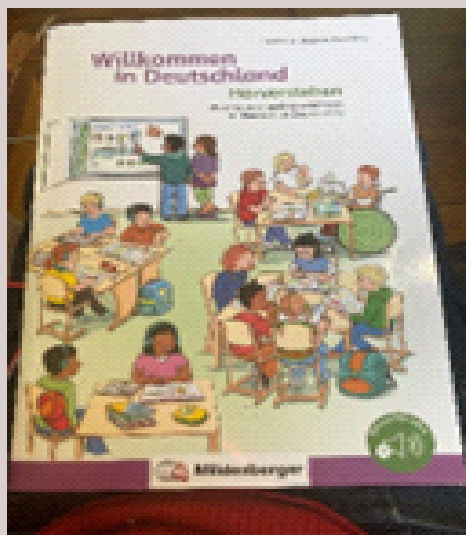


## CRAFT GROUP

We **DO** do Crafting in Craft Group.. (honest!), but it's amazing what our so enjoyable general chat reveals.. This week we discovered that one of our members writes books to teach the German language, so beautifully presented and illustrated, and somehow that led to another member's recitation of the children's poem.."This is the house that Jack Built".. how many of us remember this poem from our childhood?

So if you would like to be a part of this so enjoyable group, (and do some Crafting!), do join us.. the more the merrier, and the greater the chat!

Contact Marion if you would like to join us



# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

## PLAY READING

A small group of us celebrated the 2024 festive season with a fun-filled couple of hours at the Florians' 2024 pantomime, "Cinderella".

The play reading group now meets at The Conon Hotel. This new venue is working well and is due, in a large part, to the helpful staff. The other arrangements are as before ie meeting every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month from 2pm until 4pm.

This year we are also changing to a shared responsibility model for the choice of plays and their presentation to the group. Having started with Fiona's choice based on the infamous Burke and Hare duo, we anticipate continuing to enjoy a range of varied and interesting plays.

Susan

## THEATRE & CINEMA GROUP

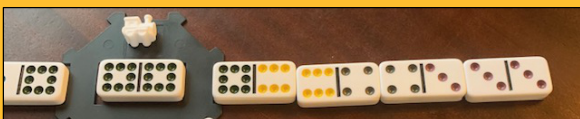
We continue to use the WhatsApp app to tell each other about up and coming programmes on at Eden Court, Vue, Cromarty Arts, Pitlochry, Strathpeffer Pavillion, and any other venue we find.

There have been numerous meet-ups ranging from **Paddington in Peru** to **Aida** and everything in between. Some of us are looking forward to seeing David Tennant's Macbeth (streamed from Donmar Warehouse) in February.

## BOARD GAMES

We continue to meet on Friday afternoons at the library. Lately we've enjoyed such games as Scotland Yard, Rummikub, Ticket to Ride and Mexican Train Dominoes

New members always welcome, contact Fiona for more details



## MAHJONG

*We would like to organize a Mahjong day, you don't need to be a member of the board games group, merely an interest in the game. The day and venue will be organized among ourselves once we know who is interested, Refreshments will be provided to ensure an enjoyable few hours of gameplay.*

*Contact Kim or Fiona for more details*

# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

## WALKING GROUP

Castles and stately homes featured strongly in the walking group's autumn forays, a walk past Redcastle being followed by one past Aldourie Castle en route to Loch Dochfour. The original building at Redcastle was constructed in 1179 by the brother of King William the Lion, and after a chequered history the current buildings were renovated into a high class Victorian residence around 1840. However, it was requisitioned by the army during WW2 and returned to its owner afterwards in a bad way. Unoccupied since, it has fallen into the ruin you now see (photo 1). Aldourie was originally a 17th century tower house, but is now a much extended Victorian fantasy (photo 2).



1

A walk above Ardross took us to Loch Dubh, used first as a reservoir and then in a hydroelectric scheme for Ardross Castle, a Victorian pile and recently of "Traitors" notoriety. Rosehaugh was yet another stately home site to be visited this autumn. Rosehaugh House grew to become one of the most extravagant stately homes of the North, but economically unsustainable in modern times, it was demolished in 1959, leaving only a terrace and wine cellars which are regrettably empty.



2

Other recent outings included a new route around the woods and fields of Strathpeffer and an exploration of Daviot Woods. Finally, a shoreline walk from Ardersier led to the ramparts of Fort George, probably the most impressive fortress of all hereabouts, yet one which has never seen military action in earnest. You can descend into the impressive moated system on the north side free! (photo 3).



3

# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

## BOOK GROUP

In December the book group discussed *Music in the Dark* by Sally Magnusson which was well received - the discussion covered the clearances, social displacement and most felt the author had dealt with this big issues in a realistic way, drawing on historical events based on some real and other fictional characters. It inspired visits to Croik Church with its moving part in the story of the clearances.

At the January meeting we discussed *A Town Called Solace and Conclave*, both of which were well received. The book for February is *The Salt Path* by Raynor Winn and for March we will be reading *Orbital* by Samantha Harvey and *You Are Here* by David Nicholls.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS

This new group meets on the third Monday afternoon in the Library. At our January meeting we explored 'green issues' - and our frustration with the lack of trustworthy sources of information. Next we ventured into the role of 'eco-protesters' and whether there is a legitimate place for desecration of art, statues, gravestones or other public artifacts as a means of attracting attention to a particular issue.

Finally, we had a lively discussion about the safety of women and girls in today's society: have things got worse since the beginning of the feminist movement of 50 years ago? What are the factors influencing the behaviour of the younger generation towards girls and women? This is a discussion that could run and run... The 'kick-off' topic for February is the impact of tourism on our fragile environments...

## NEW GROUPS?

### Proposed Music Group

Our Interest Groups encourage us to regularly engage in shared interests that we might otherwise neglect due to our busy lives.

I would like to start a music group to enjoy music more intentionally rather than as background noise.

I have a good selection of CDs and a player. If you are interested in listening to symphonies, choral works, pop, jazz, soul, film soundtracks, or dance music, please contact me, Marion



BSL British Sign Language

Ever fancied learning BSL?

If there is enough interest Fiona will run a group, contact her to express an interest

# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

## PSYCHOLOGY

Are you a people watcher? Do you read newspapers and wonder why people do the things they do? Do you sometimes wonder why you are the way you are? If so then psychology would undoubtedly interest you, as this subject is all about understanding the mind and behaviour.

At the moment we are exploring some of the well-known names in psychology that have influenced our thinking eg Freud, Carl Rogers, Maslow.

Join us on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month, next meeting February 18<sup>th</sup> at 3pm, when we will be exploring the work of Margaret Mead a well-known anthropologist as well as a psychologist.

New members welcome and no prior knowledge is needed just your experience of life.

We meet on Zoom as we also have members from Inverness & Black Isle u3a and it saves on travel, especially in the winter.

Contact Jenny for more details

## COFFEE & LUNCH CLUB

We started this group last year but haven't met for a while so it would be great to start up again.

We meet on a Thursday at 11am for coffee and if tempted a cake and if even more tempted stay on for lunch or come along for lunch at 12pm.

Please let me know if you are interested in getting the group going again so we can start next month.

Jenny



## U3A RADIO PODCAST

Have you caught this yet?

This monthly series is available on YouTube and on podcast platforms, with new episodes every 17<sup>th</sup> of the month.

February will feature topics on the butterfly emergency, landscape photography, and ventriloquism.



## HAVE YOU CHECKED OUT THE U3A ONLINE LEARNING EVENTS?

u3a members can access free online talks, workshops, and courses, mostly led by fellow members with some from notable speakers. These events are exclusively for u3a members.

Some of the topics available:

- Laughter yoga
- Things you didn't know you could do online for older people
- Artificial intelligence news
- Exploring world faiths
- Dorothy Levitt: an Edwardian lady racing driver

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

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

### THANKS

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

### CONTACTS