

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2025

10-12

COFFEE MORNING
THE CAPSTONE CENTRE, ALNESS

10-12

THURSDAY 10th APRIL

CONVENOR'S CHAT

Spring has sprung, and the winter blues are gone! Daffodils and blossoms are everywhere, bringing a burst of colour to our lives. Thank you for continuing to support our u3a and your ongoing attendance at our interest groups and General meetings.

Our AGM on 20th March was well attended by more than 40 members and we were able to elect our new committee members which included my role change. Thank you.

Hopefully we will continue to grow both in numbers and group diversity and continue to enjoy the company and fun of being part of the u3a. There are some interesting speakers coming up for the General Meetings and we now have 21 interest groups with two new groups -*Music Appreciation* and *Learning BSL*- having had their first meetings. As always the enthusiasm and drive of the interest group leaders is important along with your ongoing interest.

A very special thank you to Jenny Brogden the outgoing Convenor. As one of the first officers of the new Dingwall and District u3a she has supported us with her drive and enthusiasm as well as local knowledge and commitment to ensuring that we have developed into a thriving organisation. We wish her well with her future activities.

Mark your calendars for the coffee morning on 10th April In Alness at the Capstone Centre. Please come along and chat to people who may be new to the u3a. By spreading the word we can continue to grow to suit you, the members.

If you have any suggestions or want to know more about becoming a committee member, feel free to reach out to me or any of the committee members.

Kim Miller

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

PLAY READING

The change of organisation this year where members share the responsibility of choosing and organising plays is working well.

Our second play of the year was Agatha Christie's "And Then There Were None". Christie always provides good entertainment as well as encouraging us to ponder the concepts of justice and punishment.

We then read an adaptation of George Orwell's "Animal Farm" which forced us to confront the issues of power and the abuse of power, both in literal forms and via the use of language.

George Bernard Shaw's "Arms And The Man" leads us to the question of war – why and how it is fought and the fact that it should not be glorified or seen as romantic.

Despite the "heaviness" of some issues we meet through our play reading we manage to maintain a sense of humour and enjoyment!

Contact Susan for more details

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 since Christmas, including The Importance of Earnest and Macbeth, through the National Theatre Live, The Scottish Ballet's Production of Swan Lake and Romeo and Juliet. We are now looking at booking another trip to Pitlochry Theatre in the summer.

Contact Fiona for more details. You will need a Whats App app. on your mobile phone.

BOARD GAMES

We continue to meet on Friday afternoons at the library.

Although this is a 'Board' games group, we have played a few card games as well as dominoes.

Fiona went to an Aladdin's Cave of a Board Games Shop in Stirling recently and bought 'Project L', so we are now committed to learning all about it!

New members always welcome, contact Fiona for more details

MAHJONG

We have held 2 Mahjong Days so far. They were held on a Saturday at The Men's Shed in Dingwall. Those who have attended have enjoyed it very much.

So if you are interested in playing or learning Mahjong, come along and try it.

Contact Kim for more details

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

WALKING GROUP

As usual at this time of the year, wintry weather has restricted our recent outings. We have managed three walks so far in 2025, starting with a stroll around the Belladrum estate including the "Italian Gardens" site of the music festival.

We followed this with a more energetic foray across hill and dale from Drumderfit Hill, near Munloch, past Loch Lundie and finishing near Ord Hill, above North Kessock.

Our most recent walk followed part of the Peffery Way from Strathpeffer towards Dingwall, including a section which has just become more accessible, following removal of previously installed barriers. We also visited the Eagle Stone, a 7th century Pictish standing stone which features carvings of a bird and an arch-like decoration - see photo. With a recent slight reduction in group members, we are happy to welcome new participants, particularly if, once settled in, you would like to help leading some of our walks.

Andrew



GOLF

The Golf Group will be resuming in April, so if you are seeking a casual yet competitive golf group, why don't you come along and join us?

We meet every second Tuesday at Muir of Ord. We welcome players of all skill levels for practice sessions with a retired PGA professional, rounds of golf, friendly banter, and some competition.

Contact Mel for more details.

CRAFT GROUP

Our Craft Group has settled into our new meeting place at member, Susanne's house in Maryburgh. We continue to enjoy our crafting sessions, at which we each bring along what ever we are working on, while enjoying very good "chat" and coffee and biscuits.

Members are always willing to share their skills with others, so if you would like to join this so enjoyable group, just let me know. We meet on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, from 10.30 am for up to a couple of hours.

Marion

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

BOOK GROUP

We recently enjoyed *Orbital* by *Samantha Harvey*, a short book that captivated us with its lyrical language and observations of Earth seen by astronauts. The orbital path map helped visualise their views, and there were insights into the lives of the six crew members.

We also read *You Are Here* by *David Nicholls*—a truly enjoyable and funny book. The dialogue felt natural for both male and female characters, and the walk as a vehicle for the relationship was a great idea. There were interesting discussion points on character development and landscape descriptions.

Our next reads will be *Tom Lake* (2023) by *Ann Patchett* and *The Secret History* (1993) by *Donna Tartt*

BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE

We are a small group, but would welcome more hands. BSL is not just for the Deaf: Learning BSL enhances your understanding of both verbal and non-verbal communication. It relies heavily on facial expressions and body language, making you more attuned to non-verbal cues. So, if you fancy joining us, contact me for more details

Fiona

COFFEE & LUNCH CLUB

We have only met a couple of times, since the re-launch of this group.

Our next meet-up will be on Thursday 24th April at The Highland Farm Cafe in Dingwall (IV15 9TT)

We meet at 11am for coffee and if tempted a cake and if even more tempted stay on for lunch. Or you could just come along for lunch at 12pm.

We often don't have enough time to meet and chat with others at the General Meeting, so this is a lovely way to meet up with our fellow u3a members

Contact Jenny for more details

LISTENING TO MUSIC GROUP

We have had our first meeting of our newly formed Music Group, which will meet at my home on the afternoon of the last Friday of each month. Music comes in so very many forms, so at our next meeting we will discuss how we want the group to move forward.

For our first meeting we spent an enjoyable two hours listening to a variety of music on cds, and we now have a list of music of many different sorts on which to draw on for future sessions.

Members will have their own particular “loves” which I am sure they will be happy to share with others, which hopefully will mean we learn of music gems we had not known of before. It was lovely to meet those who attended, and it was very pleasant to spend time just listening, away from the busyness of every day life.

If you would like to join us, just let me know.. you would be made so welcome.

Marion



INFORMATION

General Meetings

3rd Thursday of the month.
2pm.

Castle Street Church Hall, Dingwall

Topics to be covered:

17th April: Crofters' Commission

15th May: Inverness Castle

19th June: TBC

Committee Members

Kim Miller – Convenor/ Membership Secretary

Jeanie Lloyd – Secretary

Louise James – Treasurer

Marion Wyatt – Group Co-ordinator

Fiona Mackenzie – Media Co-ordinator

Susan Cooper – Member

Marjory Miller – Member



SOCIAL MEDIA

Do you use Social Media?

We would be very interested in how our members interact with Social Media, if at all.

Please contact Fiona (contact information is on the last page of this newsletter) and tell her what platforms/ apps you use.

Examples of social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, and YouTube.

Examples of social media apps: Snapchat, WhatsApp, Telegram, and Discord



What is Social Media? I hear you cry...

Here is the official **definition**: Social media are interactive technologies that facilitate the creation, sharing, and aggregation of content among virtual communities through text, images, videos, and other content.

Purpose: People use social media to stay connected with friends and family, share their thoughts and experiences, follow trends, and stay informed.

Business Use: Businesses and creators use social media for marketing, building brand awareness, and connecting with their audience.

Two-Way Communication: Social media is characterized by its two-way communication style, allowing for immediate feedback and interaction, unlike traditional media.

Potential Downsides: While social media offers opportunities for connection and socialization, it can also have negative effects, including the spread of misinformation, hate speech, and cyberbullying

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.

GROUP	WHEN	
Board Games	Friday p.m.	1 st & 3 rd Friday
Book Group	Thursday p.m.	4 th Thursday of month
B. S. L.	Friday a.m.	Weekly
Calligraphy	Monday a.m.	1 st & 3 rd Monday of the month
Crafts	Wednesday a.m.	1 st & 3 rd Wednesday of the month
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.	Fortnightly
Geology for Beginners	Monday p.m.	Fortnightly
German Conversation	Thursday a.m.	Weekly
Listening to Music	Friday p.m.	Last Friday of the month
Lunch/Coffee Club	Days vary	Monthly
History	Thursday p.m.	2 nd Thursday of month
Play Reading	Wednesday p.m.	2 nd & 4 th Wednesday of the 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
Spanish	Tuesday p.m.	Weekly
Theatre & Cinema Group	WhatsApp group	
Walking Group	Tuesday a.m.	Fortnightly

THANKS

To all the Group Leaders who contributed to this newsletter

CONTACTS