

# NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2025

## COFFEE MORNING

10-12

The Church Hall, Seafield Road, Muir of Ord

10-12

WEDNESDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> OCTOBER

## CONVENOR'S CHAT

Hello everyone! September is here, and guess what? Our Dingwall and District u3a meetings are back! I hope you had a wonderful summer, soaking up the lovely weather.

Our new season of General Meetings kicked off on Thursday, September 18th, when Dr. Jim Mackay, took us on a journey through history with "Old Ferries in and around Dingwall". You can see the full list of our booked speakers we have coming up, below.

A big thank you to all the group leaders who've been keeping our groups going during the summer. And to those who are starting their groups again soon, we're so excited to have you on board!

Our u3a is growing stronger and stronger, with several new interest groups popping up. If you have any ideas for an interest group, don't hesitate to reach out to any of the committee members. We're all ears!

We're also spreading the word about our u3a in our local community. We're hosting our next Coffee Morning in **Muir of Ord** on October 22nd at 10 am in the Church Hall on Seaforth Road. If you're able to chat with prospective members about our lively and vibrant u3a, we'd love to have you there.

As always, a massive thank you to the committee for their hard work in developing and maintaining our u3a.

See you all soon!

Kim Miller

## 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.

### *What we've got planned:*

October: Donald Fraser: Bridging the Years  
 November: Dr. Andrew Newton: The Romans in Scotland  
 December: Fun Christmas Quiz  
 January: The Prickly Thistle  
 March: The Blood Bikes  
 April: Pauline Butler from the Gairloch Museum

# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

## CALLIGRAPHY

Nowadays, putting pen to paper has become something of a curiosity - at least for younger people. Many U3A members will of course remember learning a cursive script at school, with a dip pen, and inkwell on our desks. We have now become accustomed to modern technology 'writing', with emails, texts, etc.

But in recent years, there has come a revival of sorts, with an increasing interest in fine writing. Even if one's handwriting has deteriorated badly, with practice it is possible to re-learn the art of writing, perhaps for special occasions - messages for a birthday, or congratulations, etc.

In our small Calligraphy group we are making our own way towards this re-learning, and if you would like to try it, please get in touch. The tools needed are few, and the group can supply these to get you going, also with advice on script forms.

Gordon Gallacher

## GOLF

We had a successful summer full of fun, friendship, and great golf.

New members have made fantastic progress, growing in confidence and skills. Regular practice sessions with retired PGA Professional Michael Field have helped everyone improve their game.

Our popular Texas Scrambles at Aigas Golf Course brought together experienced players and beginners for friendly, competitive, and very enjoyable rounds. After rounds we shared plenty of laughs over coffee and cake.

We are planning to play many different courses next year. We are also looking to welcome new members-whether you are brand new to golf or a seasoned player, you'll find a warm and supportive group.

Mel Brydon



## MUSIC GROUP

Our u3a Music Group meets on the last Friday of every month at 2pm, at my home near Conon Bridge.

Members are welcome to bring music—CDs or DVDs—to share and enjoy together over coffee and biscuits. We listen to a range of styles, from classical to lighter genres, based on members' choices.

It's an opportunity for two hours of relaxed listening in good company. If you'd like to join us or find out more, please get in touch.

Marion

# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

## WALKING GROUP

The walking group has continued as usual through the summer. A walk to the Beaulie Firth shoreline at Tarradale passed several historic sites, including Gilchrist church (16C) and the sites of Tarradale Castle (destroyed by Robert the Bruce), a Pictish barrow and an iron age fort. Continuing the theme of castle destruction, Ormond Castle was visited on the next walk. This looks down over Avoch to the Moray Firth and was the home of Andrew de Moray who fought at Stirling Bridge with William Wallace, but this castle was probably finished off by Oliver Cromwell.

Culloden needs little historical introduction. Another walk from here led down through Culloden Woods to where the prisoners' stone, an execution site for Jacobite prisoners, is situated.

Following this, we explored Cawdor Woods. Unusually for castles in these unruly parts, this one has survived largely unscathed over the centuries and is still lived in today. These days, Cawdor is renowned for the residency of Percy the peacock (photo 1).

Lastly, we got away from historic sites to revisit Rogie Falls and surrounds (photo 2), where we were lucky enough to see the salmon leaping. Our numbers have gone down a little recently due to people moving from the area and also some fitness issues, and newcomers are very welcome to come and try out our walks.

Andrew



## GEOLOGY

### Introduction to geology

Starts on October 13th and continues on second and fourth Monday of each month for 10 sessions. Meet in the Dingwall Library from 2pm to 4pm.

This is a short introductory course to geology over about 10 sessions. No previous knowledge needed.

We will explore the basic processes that have shaped the Earth and 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 one or two short outings to look at rocks in the local area.

Please contact Terri Cunningham for more details



# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

## BOOK CLUB

The Book Group continued to meet over the summer, with mixed (generally thumbs down) reviews of 'Tom Lake' by Ann Pratchett, and 'The Secret History' by Donna Tartt. 'No Country for Old Men' by Cormac McCarthy was a gruesome tale with probably too much violence and psychopathy for many tastes, although it's an "American Classic" apparently!

On to more gentle reading, we enjoyed Maggie O'Farrell's 'The Hand that First Held Mine' - interesting character development and although there were two seemingly unconnected storylines, it was satisfying when they came together. In August we read Lisa Wingate's 'Before We Were Yours,' a multigenerational story based on harrowing real life events. We are looking into accessing Highland Library's multiple copies database for future choices - more on this next time.

The next meeting will be at 2pm on 25th September in the Library. For a change of pace we will be reading Slow Horses, (2010) the first in a series written by Mick Herron. Should be fun! then for October we will be reading The Shepherd's Hut (2018) by Tim Winton

Louise

## CRAFT

Our Craft Group meets at Susanne's house in Maryburgh on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month, from 10.30 am for couple of hours.

We have continued meeting over the summer months, and now look forward to our autumn and into winter meetings.

We bring along whatever craft we are currently working on, and members are very happy to share their skills so that new crafts can be learnt.

The group is always most enjoyable, with great general chat over coffee, and lots of laughter from our general life experiences. If anyone is interested in joining us, you would be made most very welcome. Just contact me, and I will give you Susanne's address.

Marion



## CURRENT AFFAIRS

Current Affairs is taking a break and will be relaunched later in the year.

Please contact Louise if you are interested in joining in

# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

## SHORT STORY

This group meets on the second Friday each month, 2pm in the Conon Hotel.

We choose a different short story each month and discuss our opinions over coffee and cake.

A bit like a book group, but less reading..  
Next meeting is 10<sup>th</sup> October

If you are interested in joining the group, contact Alison for more details.

## PRACTISING ART

First Monday of each month, 2pm to 4pm in St Clements Church Hall, Church St. Dingwall, IV15 9SB.

We are a group of people who want space and time to do some art - any kind of art. It is a supportive group with guidance if required. Do you already dabble but don't know how to move forward? This could be the place for you.

Maybe you think you can't draw or paint? Perhaps you were put off at school? Too embarrassed and maybe terrified to try? Maybe you'd like to have a go but don't know how to start. You can start right at the beginning with guidance if you want it. No experience, knowledge or talent needed.

Beginner or dabbler, all welcome. Just try and see what you can achieve.

Please contact Terri for more details

## PLAY READING

Play reading resumed in September after a break over the Summer. We meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of each month at the Conon Hotel, Conon Bridge.

In our group we read a wide variety of plays, differing in genre and period. Our plays are chosen from "safe" (copyright free) sites. We enjoy -

- taking on the identity of a character and thereby exploring his/her reality
- becoming familiar with a play previously unknown to us or
- re-acquainting ourselves with a play we may not have read for a long time
- discussing issues raised in the play

Looking forward to a session of new play reading adventures!

Susan Cooper

## CREATIVE WRITING

This is a lively and busy group. We meet on the first Thursday of each month at 2pm in the Men's Shed in Dingwall. Each month we write on a particular theme.

We have written poems, stories and non-fiction on Memories, The Seasons, and News amongst other topics.

Next meeting is 2<sup>nd</sup> October



# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

## BOARD GAMES

We're a small group open to new members. We've continued meeting over the holidays, though sometimes with fewer people.

We play a variety of games, not just 'board games', but also card-type games, such as Tidy the Library.

A favourite with most people is Rummikub, we are all getting much better at that! Other games we have recently played are Chameleon, Race the Rails, Mexican Train, Colour Brain and Yahtzee.

If you're interested, contact Fiona or drop by the library; our next session is October 3<sup>rd</sup>, when we hope to try Monopoly – Deal (a card game)... Much quicker than the board game!

## U3A

U3A Jamboree was held in Edinburgh in August this year. U3A Scotland was heavily involved.

If you missed it and wondered what went on please go to: <https://scotland.u3asite.uk/newsletter>

Where you can read all about it.

You might also be interested in following the U3A Scotland website too: <https://scotland.u3asite.uk>

Don't forget our website: <https://dingwall.u3asite.uk>

Several U3A pages are available on Facebook, providing opportunities for users to communicate and exchange ideas. If you are a Facebook user, please contact Fiona, who is exploring the possibility of establishing a similar platform for our members, pending sufficient

## COFFEE & LUNCH CLUB

***We have decided to break up the coffee and lunch club into two different groups.***

**Coffee and Chat** will meet for a social gathering on the 4th Thursday of each month, likely at the same venue each time.

The next meeting is at The Courtyard in Dingwall at 11am on Thursday, 30th October.

Contact Fiona or Marion if you'd like to join.

**The Lunch Group** plans to visit local restaurants monthly for lunch, with occasional evening meetings if desired. If you're interested in trying out different dishes, and would like to join us, please contact Fiona or Marion.



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 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday
Book Group	Thursday p.m.	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday of month
B. S. L.	Friday a.m.	Weekly
Calligraphy	Monday a.m.	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month
Coffee & Chat	Thursday a.m.	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday 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
Family History	WhatsApp	
Golf	Tuesday a.m.	Fortnightly
Geology for Beginners	Monday p.m.	Fortnightly
Geology 2	WhatsApp	
German Conversation	Thursday a.m.	Weekly
Music Group	Friday p.m.	Last Friday of the month
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
Short Stories	Friday p.m.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday of month
Spanish	Tuesday p.m.	Weekly
Theatre & Cinema Group	WhatsApp group	
Walking Group	Tuesday a.m.	Fortnightly

### YOUR COMMITTEE

Kim Miller – Convenor/Membership Secretary  
 Jeanie Lloyd – Secretary  
 Louise James – Treasurer  
 Marion Wyatt – Group Co-ordinator  
 Fiona Mackenzie – Media Co-ordinator  
 Susan Cooper – Committee Member  
 Marjory Miller – Committee Member

### THANKS

To all the Group Leaders who contributed to this newsletter