

NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2026



COFFEE MORNING

Thursday 1st October, St Clements Church Hall

10-12



CONVENOR'S CHAT

Hello again,

As the summer comes to a close so the activities of Dingwall and District u3a start to increase. Hopefully you will have refreshed yourself and are now looking forward to our various events.

This newsletter will include details of the forthcoming General Meetings (always the third Thursday of the month) in the Castle Street Church Hall. These are very interesting and varied . We are currently booking until June 2027 and the full programme will be available shortly.

If you have heard a good speaker that you would like to hear at the u3a please just let me know.

We will have a table at the 5th September Rotary street fair in Dingwall and one of our free Coffee mornings in St Clements Hall on 1st October.

Thanks again to all of our group leaders who with you our wonderful members create our friendly u3a.

We are also looking into some new groups including an extra Coffee and Chat group (on a different weekday) and a Radio listening/discussion group.

Please get in touch with Sue (group co-ordinator) if you are interested in these new groups.

There will be a screening of the National Emergency Briefing film on Climate which we will be co-hosting . This is being promoted by the National u3a Climate change group and we will send out more information shortly.

Thank you to Fiona for preparing this newsletter .

Looking forward to meeting up with everyone again over the next few months

Kim

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

PLAYREADING

Before our Summer break Hugh asked us via "Lottery Play" what would happen if we won the lottery and then lost it and won it again. Lin presented one of her own plays – "Get A Life". This was a metadrama about three characters who find themselves in a mysterious house, with no recollection of how they got there and no knowledge of their lives beyond what they read on a brief questionnaire. Both plays were intriguing and thought-provoking.

On the second Wednesday in September we resume our play reading sessions with "The Skin Game" by John Galsworthy. We then continue to meet every second and fourth Wednesdays of the month.

Susan Cooper

The Rosie Project by Graeme Simison, focused on the interesting and topical area of neurodiversity; overall an engaging story with a good mix of insight, humour and pace-setting story telling.

The Adversary by Michael Crummey, - mixed views on the book which was unrelentingly grounded in misery! It helps to know that life was rather like that 200 years ago in Newfoundland, and that Abe Strapp's character was based on a real person who was just as nasty and evil. Some liked the use of language but we were all looking for a bit of cheer and redemption, of which there was

BOOK GROUP

we continue to meet at 2pm on the 4th Thursday at my home. New members welcome! I am away in Canada for the September meeting but the group will meet in the library on the 24th September

Louise

Our comments of the recently read books:

The Land in Winter by Andrew Miller was a well crafted book - slow moving and possibly overly detailed for some. Good character development. The ending left us hanging a bit with various interpretations possible.

Clear by Carys Davies. a very readable and enjoyable (short) tale set at the time of the clearances and also the breakaway Free Church. Good character development, intriguing period detail - and excellent writing.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

WALKING GROUP

Our fortnightly walks have continued as usual over the last six months. Warm sunshine arrived early for our April climb to Carn na Leitire (434m), [photo 1], above Abriachan. This is about as high as we get, although we did cheat a bit by starting at 280m from Loch Laide. After a new walk through the Brahan estate past the Tally Sow, reputedly formerly associated with drunkards, the sun shone again for a stroll along the Blackwater, above Garve. Major Caulfeild (sic), who supervised the building of the Little Garve bridge [photo 2] across the Blackwater in 1767, was reputedly also fond of a party - at his house in Cradlehall, Inverness - but is best known as General Wade's successor as the Highlands' road builder-in-chief after the '45. Our summer activities have included walks in Evanton woods to the Black Rock Gorge (haunted by the Green Man), into the Fannich Estate, around Munlochy Bay and through Culbokie Woods (haunted by the Devil), but the best weather for another sunny photo came on a walk above Strathpeffer to An Dubh Lochan, with no known supernatural attractions but with water lilies on show [photo 3]. Although we have more than 20 walkers "on our books" at the moment, we average about 11 participants per walk and new members are very welcome to try us out.

Andrew



NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

SHORT STORY

If you like reading but don't have time / just too lazy to read a novel every month, why not join the little sibling of the Book Group, and meet to discuss short and (nearly) always sweet stories; little effort, much reward. We meet on the second Friday of each month at 2pm in the Canon Hotel. New members always welcome. All our stories are freely accessible online. In September we will be talking about The Monkey's Paw by WW Jacobs and many other things besides ..

Alison

BEGINNER'S BRIDGE

This small group has been meeting since the end of March. The participants have mastered the basics of the game and will soon be progressing to more competitive elements.

If you played bridge some time ago and would like to revisit the game, this group would probably suit you. We are friendly, chatty and do not take ourselves too seriously.

If you have never played Bridge and would like to find out more, please get in touch.

We usually meet in my house on a Thursday afternoon but that is flexible.

Elaine

BOARD GAMES

We continue to meet fortnightly in the library on a Friday afternoon, we play a variety of games, Catan, Scotland Yard, Azul, Labyrinth and Ticket to Ride Board Games, as well as Dominoes, Yahtzee and Rummikub. We've also played various card games. New members will always be welcome, just come along. Our next meeting will be October 2nd

Fiona

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

HISTORY

We have lively discussions at the Canon Hotel. Topics include controversial people in history, certain centuries world wide, empires . We tend to explore freely historical rabbit holes. All welcome.

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FAMILY HISTORY

We continue to meet monthly face to face and on WhatsApp in between.

A variety of genealogy sites are used by the members, so we can help each other.

New members would be very welcome, now that the evenings are drawing in, maybe this is the time to start researching your family tree
Fiona

WHERE'S MARJORY?

Every year, one of our members disappears from our lives at the end of May, only returning in September. I persuaded her, this year, to write a bit for the newsletter about her travels



For the last 15 years we (my husband Jim and I) have spent the summers sailing the canals and rivers of Europe, aboard our 42 ft motor boat Alida.

We started in France in 2010 - having sailed the previous year from Caley Marina in Inverness where we had spent 3 years renovating her. After a summer in France we then continued through Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and finally Sweden. Each year we would find a boatyard or marina where Alida could overwinter and we would fly home for the winter.

However we now have a permanent winter storage in Hasselt in the Netherlands, and now confine ourselves to The Netherlands and Belgium for our summer sailing.

Usually we wander where the notion takes us although we do have a rough idea of the route we are going to take. This year however we had fixed places to be as we first attended is a boat festival in Ostend, Belgium at the end of May. To get there you have to cross the Westerschelde, an estuary open to the North Sea so the timing has to be right for tides, also the wind has to be from the right direction as wind against waves is not a clever idea. We spent 5 days waiting to get the combination right but it was worth it as Ostend voor Anker is one of the largest boat festivals in Europe, and as we had been before we met up with boats from our previous visit.



After that it was back across the Westerschelde, not so bad in this direction as the prevailing wind is in the direction we wanted to go in.

Our next fixed date was at the end of June in Gouda (where the cheese comes from). This was with the Dutch Barge Association - although we are neither Dutch nor a barge. It is an Association originally for people who had bought Dutch barges, but now for anyone who sails the European canals. They hold a rally each year but we had never been before and weren't sure what to expect. However it was very well organised - about 20 boats and lots of activities, the only thing wrong was the heat which was in the high 30's with no wind.

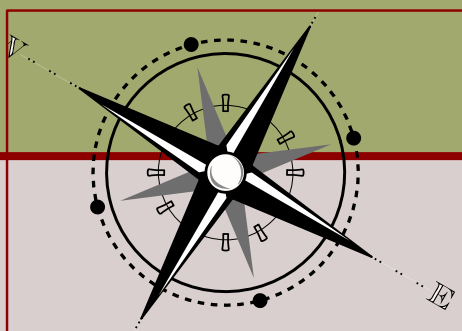


Our last fixed date was in Enkhuizen for another rally, this time with the LBVHB an organisation for historic Dutch boats, we had sailed with them as guests 2 years ago on their 50th anniversary cruise and have since joined. Enkhuizen is on the IJzelmeer (formerly Zuiderzee before the barrage was built) and as it is not possible to get there by canal you have to go out into the IJzelmeer. The day we went the wind was stronger than forecast and as the meer is shallow the waves pick up quickly, so it was rough with the waves on our beam. After about 1 kilometer we turned round and went back to the marina, where we unloaded our bikes and cycled to Enkhuizen, it's only 18 kilometers and with e bikes not a problem. The next day we sailed to Enkhuizen in flat calm!

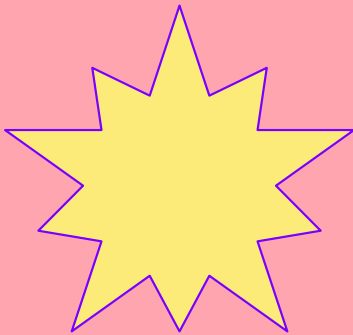
We have now sailed across the IJzelmeer to Friesland and are slowly making our way to Hasselt to get the boat ready for the winter. In between we are doing a lot of cycling, not much walking as there aren't many places for walking where you can't also cycle and generally enjoying ourselves. Friesland is a very interesting province, in some ways it is completely different from the rest of the country with it's own language which I have not attempted to learn although I am trying to learn Dutch, unfortunately Dingwall U3A doesn't have a Dutch conversation group.



Marjory's herb garden aboard Alida

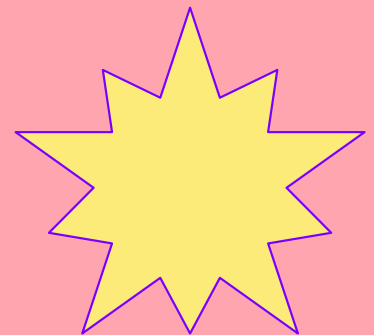


WHAT'S ON



COFFEE MORNING

Thursday October 1st
St. Clements Church Hall
10:30 - 12



GENERAL MEETINGS

Thursday **October** 15th : Diana Jones - *The history of the Fire Brigade in Scotland.*

Thursday **November** 19th: Cmdr Tim Honnor - *Lachlan Macquarie one of the founders of modern Australia.*

Thursday **December** 17th: Christmas Quiz

THE CONON HOTEL QUIZ NIGHT

Many of our u3a groups meet at the Conon Hotel, where we are always welcome by the very friendly staff. Every month they hold a quiz night for charity, a different charity each time. The next quiz will be in aid of Oxygen Works, which a few of our members have used.

Wednesday 14th October 7:30

£5 per team member. Team max of 6 people. 7:30 start



WEA Highland Local Association Gathering

Tuesday 29th September 2026, 12:30-2
Inverness Library Boardroom

- Free talk by Norman Newton on 'The Inverness Victorian Market: a fateful fire and a faithful dog'
- Displays of various previous WEA projects
- A chance for you to help shape the programme for the next year.
- A very short AGM with homebaking to get us up and running again



Free and all welcome to this informal and friendly meeting, whether you have been to WEA events in the past or not. Any questions contact WEAHighland.LocalAssociation@wea.ac.uk

FANCY TRYING SOMETHING DIFFERENT?

GROUP	WHEN	
Beginner's Bridge	Days Vary	Weekly
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
Coffee & Chat	Thursday a.m.	Monthly
Coffee & Chat 2	Tuesday a.m.	Monthly
Crafts	Wednesday a.m.	1 st & 3 rd Wednesday of the month
Current Affairs Discussion Group	Monday p.m.	3 rd Monday of month
Family History	Days Vary	Monthly
French Conversation	Tuesday p.m.	Weekly
Golf	Tuesday a.m.	Fortnightly
German Conversation	Thursday a.m.	Weekly
Listening to Music	Friday p.m.	Last Friday of the month
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
Short Story	Friday p.m.	Monthly
Spanish	Tuesday p.m.	Weekly
Theatre & Cinema Group	WhatsApp group	
Walking Group	Tuesday a.m.	Fortnightly

Your Committee Members

Kim Miller – Convenor
 Steve Carol – Secretary
 Louise James – Treasurer
 Susan Cooper – Group Co-ordinator
 Steve Carol – Membership Secretary

Fiona Mackenzie – Media Co-ordinator
 Marjory Miller – Member
 Susanne McCafferty – Member
 Helen Jenner – Member

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this newsletter

If you would like to contact Kim, Steve, Sue or Fiona, go to the CONTACT page on the website.