

# NEWSLETTER

## SUMMER 2023

### CONVENOR'S CHAT

Life has been busy since the AGM with both u3a and other activities mainly with Groam House Museum and helping to organise the Highland Wool Fest, so it is good to reflect on what has happened.

It's great to welcome new members to the committee, Jeanie Llyod and Fiona Mackenzie who have both already got to grips with helping. Fiona has very kindly (or is that foolishly !!) volunteered to take on editing the newsletter for us. The results you can all see and will hopefully contribute to in the future.

Our u3a continues to gain members and we are creeping up to pre-Covid numbers which is great. The coffee mornings that we organised have helped to boost numbers so many thanks to the Interest Group Leaders who have come to talk about their groups and the u3a in general.

Two new groups, Golf and Play reading, have been popular so keep telling us about those ideas for new groups. Remember, if you have thought it would be good idea, you can bet that there will be others out there wanting to join.

Our walking group is very popular so much so that we really need to start another one, but we do need someone to volunteer to be the Group Leader/Facilitator. Honestly it needn't be too onerous just be the contact person and the person that sends out the information. All other activities connected to it can be shared with the group and I am sure Andrew who runs our successful walking group will be on hand with advice, as will the committee. Just contact myself or Marion if you would like to discuss it.

I hope you all have a great summer and though some of you may continue your interest groups the general meetings will have a break till September 21<sup>st</sup>. So, watch for the news on Facebook and in the newsletter.

Jenny (Convenor)

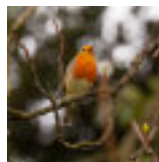
#### March:

**Bob Pegg** made music from an array of objects, including a conch shell

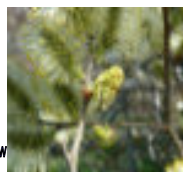


#### April:

**Terri Cunningham** took us on a virtual nature walk



Robin marking his territory



Delicate Goat Willow

#### May:

**Vee Walker** regaled us with stories of her ancestors and how she set about writing a book about her grandfather



#### Committee members

**Jenny Brogdan - Convenor**  
**Kim Miller - Membership Secretary**  
**Louise James - Treasurer**  
**Marion Wyatt - Group Co-Ordinator**  
**Jeanie Lloyd - Committee Member**  
**Fiona Mackenzie - Newsletter Editor**



#### General Meetings

**Dates for your Diary**  
**Speakers to be confirmed**  
**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September**  
**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October**  
**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November**

# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

## PLAY READING

**Cast:** a small group of eager playreaders

**Setting:** a room in one member's home. Room has a view over garden and distant mountains.

Fortnightly sessions began in mid-March 2023. Plays so far have been chosen from a very useful U3A play reading website. But we will also venture further afield in search of suitable material.

**Scene 1:** One or two warm-ups to get us relaxed and comfortable.

**Scene 2:** Group members delve into the lives of others as character and plot are established.

**Interval:** A short break for a chat over coffee/tea.

**Scene 3:** Members continue to lose themselves in their characters as the plot develops, conflicts are raised and resolved, denouncement reached.

**Scene 4:** Some light discussion arising from aspects of the play eg characters' motives, how the play ended

**Curtain:** An enjoyable and satisfying two hours on a Wednesday afternoon with group members keen to tackle the next play.

Sue



## CALLIGRAPHY

We meet at the library, fortnightly where some work through a particular piece of writing, while others practice or learn different alphabets. We were very lucky to have had a visit from a retired calligraphy teacher, Penny, who gave us plenty of tips, especially for left handers.



## BOOK GROUP

Our book group meets at 2pm on the fourth Thursday of the month at my home in Dingwall. We read a range of - mostly fiction- titles that we choose from member suggestions, and generally find plenty to agree or disagree on. It's a good way to discover new authors, both recent and established. Our meetings will continue over the summer and if you are interested in joining us on 22<sup>nd</sup> June when we'll be reading Pachinko by Mim Jin Lee.

# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

## HISTORY



Meeting on the second Thursday of each month at 2pm (usually) . We discuss a variety of events or have topical discussions about historical events.

Recently we have been working our way through the History of Scotland starting with the Picts and are now wandering through the union of the crowns with a side trip to the west to consider the Lordship of the Isles.

World history and what happened on this day are also options.

With occasional field trips and cups of tea we try to bring some insight or just some personal thoughts to these areas.

No prior knowledge or historical training required.

## PRACTISING ART

First Monday of each month, 2pm to 4pm.

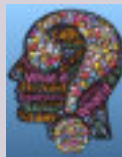
Just a group of people who want space and time to do some art - any kind of art. A supportive space with guidance if required. Do you already dabble but don't know how to move forward? This could be the place for you.

Or maybe you think you can't draw? 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.



## 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.

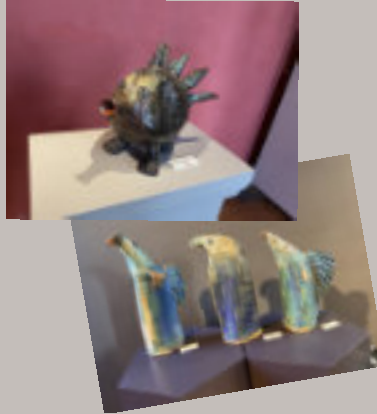
In our sessions we have covered a range of subjects keeping mainly to social psychology but also some background on the understanding of how our brain works when we deal with some of the situations we face day-to-day. Our final session is on Tuesday May 23<sup>rd</sup> but we will be starting again in September on the third Tuesday in the month at 3pm.

# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

## ART APPRECIATION

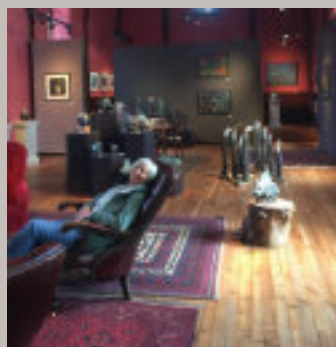
We finally managed to get out and about as a group. It was lovely to visit local Art Galleries/ Workshops recently. A few folk had a catch up over coffee afterwards too.

Our March meeting saw 7 of us attend a demonstration / talk about glass fusion art by Lynne at The Noost Art Studio in Rosemarkie. She runs regular day long workshops as well as supplying several gift shops in the area. We all found it really interesting and inspiring.



In April (a slightly different) 7 of us went to Kilmorack Art Gallery near Beaulie to see the visiting Lotte Glob exhibition.

As the photos show this was mainly ceramic art with some of her etchings. The group was very mixed in their opinion of Lotte's work but those who like it agreed the larger pieces are far more appealing when seen in a proper setting; out in the wild.



For anyone interested in joining this group, our next meeting will be the second Tuesday in September 2023 at 2pm. Venue to be confirmed. Please let Marion know if you wish to be added to the emailing list for further information.

“ART IS NOT WHAT YOU SEE, BUT WHAT YOU MAKE OTHERS SEE”

EDGAR DEGAS

# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

## WALKING GROUP

The walking group continues to meet once a fortnight. We are continuing to hold our active walkers' numbers at 20. Further enlargement of the group could lead to difficulties in finding sufficiently large car parks and post-walk cafes, and keeping tabs on a large - group during limited-visibility (woodland) walks can be an issue too.

We started our activities this year with a walk around the Cromarty estate. Cromarty is overflowing with historical interest, but perhaps less well known is the nearby "pirates graveyard", so called because many of its gravestones are decorated with the skull and crossbones. This site, St. Regulus burial ground, also features an open underground vault (photo 1), all that remains of an earlier chapel, used by deceased occupants of nearby Cromarty House.



Our next walk took us from Avoch to views above Munloch Bay (photo 3) on a lovely day, but violent gales rather interfered with plans for the next walk around the woods above Culbokie. However, our intrepid walk leader found a way around the fallen trees to viewpoints

Rather better weather was available for our next route around the road-free northeast shores of Loch Ness, including a view of the recently renovated Aldourie Castle (photo 2). You can rent this privately - prices are not highlighted on the website!



looking over to the Ben Wyvis range. Icy weather meant that we only had one walk in March, around the woods and rivers surrounding Cawdor Castle. Unusually for castles in these unruly parts, it has survived largely unscathed over the centuries and is still lived in today.

**Thank you to those group members (Michael & Elisabeth) who took two of these walks.**

Our Group evolved from a few of us chatting at the last coffee morning, three of us expressed a desire to learn crochet, while a fourth said she loved to crochet and would be happy to teach us!

We meet fortnightly and at the moment we are concentrating on crochet, but we all have different talents, so other crafts will be pursued, each member taking on the role of 'teacher' Others may just bring their ongoing project while enjoying the craic.

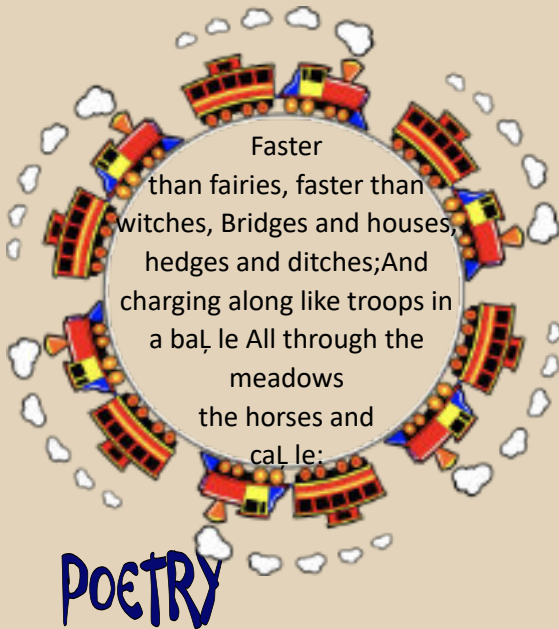


## CRAFTS



The Group enjoying a social time in the sun

# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS



We meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month at 2:00 PM in the Connan Hotel where we enjoy a cup of their coffee and some of their delicious home bakes. We decide on a topic for each meeting and we arrive armed with our pick of our favourite poems from that genre. We each read our selection to the group after which follows a short discussion on why that poem was picked and maybe something about the poet himself or herself. It is amazing how many different views there are on one subject. Our latest topics have been transport, humour, clothing and shopping.

We will continue to meet through the summer months.

Poem:  
From a Railway Carriage.  
R L Stevenson

## GOLF



The inaugural meeting of the newly formed golf group was held on Tuesday 25th of April at Muir of Ord golf course, the organiser Mel Bryden had approached the manager who kindly allowed us to use their practice facilities. There were seven members, of varying abilities, in attendance and all of us greatly benefited from an hour's excellent tuition from Michael Field a retired PGA coach and a U3A member.

We attempted both chipping and putting skills followed by a welcomed hot drink in the clubhouse. Meetings are expected to be every two weeks to be arranged at various venues depending on our progress.

Our grateful thanks go to both Michael and John Forbes the Muir of Ord Golf Club manager

Julie Ross



# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

## GEOLOGY-

### for Beginners and the Mystified



Fourth Monday of each month 1pm to 3pm.

No previous knowledge needed. There is a story in every rock if we can see it. Why are there so many different types of rocks? How do mountains grow and wear away? How have scientists worked out that Scotland was once south of the equator? How is our landscape made? These are just some of the questions we'll try to answer. This group is a very basic introduction to geology. We'll be looking at rocks and landscapes to explore and understand some of the events in the history of the Highlands, Scotland and the Earth. On short outings or local walks, you'll learn to see the evidence for yourself. Strictly no mountain climbing, rock hopping or hard hats. All welcome whether you are a rock novice or already have some knowledge, please come and share it with the group. If weather is against us, there is still plenty to think about, and besides, I have lots of rocks to look at, perhaps over a coffee.

## BUTTERFLIES



Summer is the time when bees and butterflies buzz and flutter around in the garden.

Buddleia, Verbena, Honeysuckle and Lavender will attract them

Night time brings the moths to these same plants, and these in turn provide food for bats



Getting up close

A Recent Visit to Contin Island



## EXPLORING NATURE

First Monday of each month, 10am to 12 noon.

Absolutely no previous knowledge required, just a sense of wonder and interest. Short outings looking for wildlife and plants in the local area. We'll think about seasons, different habitats and the flora and fauna that make up the local biodiversity including birds, plants, invertebrates, fungi, land-based and water-based life, and anything else we can find. There'll be plenty of time to look and listen, and to share your knowledge from a lifetime of living with nature. When the weather is really against us, there's still plenty to discuss and think about but perhaps over a coffee.

The table below shows all the different groups and when they meet up. If you would like more details of any of the groups not already mentioned, please contact Marion

GROUP	WHEN	
Art Appreciation	Tuesday p.m.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of month
Book Group	Thursday p.m.	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday of month
Calligraphy	Monday a.m.	Fortnightly
Crafts	Wednesday p.m.	Fortnightly
Creative writing	Thursday p.m.	1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday of month
Exploring Nature	Monday a.m.	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday of month
French Conversation	Tuesday p.m.	Weekly
Golf	Tuesday am	Fortnightly
Geology for Beginners	Monday p.m.	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday of month
German Conversation	Wednesday a.m.	Weekly
Photography	Thursday a.m.	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday of month
History	Thursday p.m.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday of month
Play Reading	Wednesday p.m.	Fortnightly
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 Walks	Tuesday a.m.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of month
Spanish Conversation	Tuesday p.m.	Weekly

Day	Morning	Afternoon
Monday	Calligraphy - Exploring Nature	Geology - Practising Art
Tuesday	Short Walks - Golf	Art Appreciation - French - Psychology - Spanish
Wednesday	German	Crafts - Play Reading - Poetry
Thursday	Photography	Book Group - Creative writing - History

# NEWS FROM DINGWALL

## Dingwall Heritage Trail



The Trail begins at the 'Welcome Panel', outside the Old Post Office. The Town Trail heads along the High Street towards the Town House while The Country Trail heads in the opposite direction, over the bridge towards the Hospital.

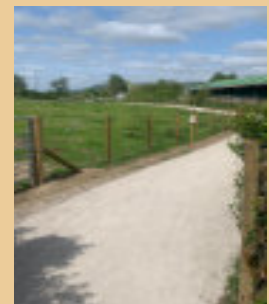
There are information panels at key points along the route, outlining some of Dingwall's history.

Each trail should take about 30 mins.



## The Peffery Way

You'll be glad to hear that the Dingwall end of the Peffery Way has now been completed. No more gates or styles to climb over!



### Photographs

Thanks to everyone who provided photographs for this edition of the newsletter. I will make sure I acknowledge individuals in later editions

*One should never count the years – one should count one's interests.*

*I have kept young trying never to lose my childhood sense of wonderment.*

*I am glad I still have a vivid curiosity about the world I live in*

Helen Keller, 1880-1968 Blind & Deaf American Writer & Scholar