



**DUMFRIES**

Charity Number SC021683

## May 2023 Newsletter

### **U3A Monthly Meeting: June**

The U3A June monthly meeting – on Thursday 1st June – will take the form of a celebratory Tea Party to mark the organisation's thirtieth anniversary.

As usual, the meeting will be between 2pm and 4pm at the Baptist Church Centre in Gillbrae Road (DG1 4EJ) and the Tea Party will be followed by a quiz and a raffle. Participants are asked if they will bring a prize for the raffle.

We need to be able to tell the Centre how many people we expect to attend, in order to arrange catering for the event, so if you are planning to come along, can you please let treasurer Kathleen Simpson know by midday on Friday, May 19th at the latest?

Her contact details are [treasurer2.u3adumfries@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer2.u3adumfries@gmail.com) and 07810 387917.

### **Website Changes**

At the recent Group Leaders meeting in April, a request was made for links to the Application Form and Gift Aid Declaration Form to be available on the "JOIN" page of the website. They previously could only be found on the "DOCUMENTS" page. These changes have now been made – see <https://u3asites.org.uk/Dumfries>

### **Older People's Commissioner for Scotland**

The U3A Trust is encouraging the Scottish Government to establish an Older People's Commissioner for Scotland, to act as a champion for older people and ensure that policy and practice across government considers the long-term needs of people in later life. More at <https://Call-for-commissioner-for-older-people>

# On the Money

*Kathleen Simpson, the new U3A Dumfries Treasurer, provides a summary of her life and work prior to taking on her new role.*



Born and brought up in Fochabers in the North East of Scotland, I met my husband when I joined the Bank of Scotland and we moved to various places while furthering his career in the Bank. I went back to work after a 10-year gap bringing up our two children, who are now parents to eight lovely grandchildren, aged from 27- to 5-years-old.

I ended my career in the Bank as a Manager in Business Banking in Lerwick, Shetland, and retired in 2008. During my time in Lerwick, I chaired a Steering Committee and a Fund Raising Committee for alterations to the Church of Scotland listed building in Lerwick.

In 2003 we purchased a listed building on the Ness of Sound, Lerwick and spent three years renovating it. Then, on retirement from the Bank, we set up a successful B&B and holiday cottage venture, eventually selling this to move to Thornhill in Dumfriesshire to retire in 2010.

I have been Treasurer of various committees, including the Clickimin Hall Committee for Up Helly Aa, which catered for 600 guests on the night of the Lerwick Up Helly Aa each January. I am presently Treasurer of the Friday Art Group in Thornhill, having chaired it through the Covid years.

We are both involved with looking after our two youngest grandchildren, taking them to pre- and after-school activities. In my spare time I attend art classes at Gracefield and the Art Club in Thornhill. I also regularly attend the Moffat Farmers Market and am

a member of Scotia Crafters, selling my cushions and other items that I make. I am also a member of the Dalgarno Singers. I enjoy tending our greenhouse in the summer months and eating the fruits of our labour at harvest time.

Going forward, I look forward to meeting and chatting with you all at the monthly meetings.

## **A Policeman's Lot**

*Eric Haworth, from Moffat, was guest speaker at the U3A monthly meeting on Thursday, 4th May at the Baptist Church, and spoke about his time as a young police officer with the Lancashire Constabulary in Middleton in what is now Greater Manchester.*

Eric began by acknowledging that he had the ambition to be a police officer from an early age, partly as a result of watching BBC TV series like *Dixon of Dock Green* and *Z Cars*. His father had a butcher's shop in St Anne's in Lancashire, and, though at first unimpressed by Eric's ambition, eventually came round to supporting him.

Eric trained with the Lancashire Constabulary at their headquarters near Preston, during which time one of his early duties was to join the search near Ashton-under-Lyne for John Kilbride, the first victim of 'Moors murderers' Ian Brady and Myra Hindley, on Saddleworth Moor.

After completing his training, Eric was despatched to Middleton, where he began his time 'on the beat', equipped – in the mid-1960s – with handcuffs, a whistle, a tape measure, a truncheon, a notebook and two pieces of string – but no radio. Early experiences included his first sight of a dead body and a house breaking when, single-handed, he was able to confront and detain two teenagers until help arrived to complete their arrest.

As well as being 'on the beat', Eric was also at times on duty on Sundays on the front desk in the local police station, and he confessed to being outwitted by one of the prisoners in the cells, mistakenly giving him his sergeant's sandwich lunch, though he also impressed the sergeant with his general efficiency.

Even on one of his days off in central Manchester, Eric managed to get involved in the arrest of a woman who had fled one of the city's department stores wearing two coats.

Other highlights, if they can be called that, included the night-time arrest of a burglar, and protecting a local chip shop from the effects of Saturday night fights.

By the mid-1990s, radios became part of the standard equipment and they transformed the work, enabling Eric, on one occasion, to summon help when he became involved in a fight with a man burgling a factory.

Another innovation was the more widespread use of cars, which led Eric to be involved in a series of other adventures, including being witness to a gruesome murder, a burning car, the capture of two escaped prisoners and the discovery of a hand grenade in a greengrocer's car.

In answer to questions, Eric believed that 'Bobbies on the beat' were invaluable. He also felt there was little gun or knife crime during his time in the police service, and similarly, he thought, less racism and misogyny.

Eric's talk resonated with U3A member – and former chair – Eric Moffat, who had been a police officer over more or less the same period, and he recounted a few of his experiences as a young police officer in Dumfriesshire.

Finally, U3A History Group leader, David Dutton, thanked Mr Haworth for his talk and presented him with a book token.

## **Group Updates**

*Jeremy Shearmur writes:*

The **Discussion on Religions Group** has had several visits from people associated with different religious groups in Dumfries: Rev Johannes Wildner from Maxwelltown West Church of Scotland; Mark Smith from the River of Life Church in Dumfries; Peter Holman, who talked to us about the religious ideas of Rudolf Steiner; and one of the Imams from the Dumfries Mosque.

The **Computer and Smart-Phone Groups** are currently holding joint meetings. The groups are designed to assist anyone who needs help with, or wishes to know more about, computers and smart-phones. We operate on a self-help basis, and aim to do what we can to assist members with any problems they might have, as well as sharing information which may be useful to group members.

*Stuart King writes:*

The **PPE for Dummies Group** is a reincarnation of the Philosophy for Fun 2 group. Not having met since before Covid we have recommenced with a slight change of emphasis. We meet on the first Friday afternoon of the month from 2-4pm, but will be taking a summer break until September.

PPE stands for Philosophy, Politics and Economics. Putting it rather grandly, PPE as a university degree was born of the conviction that study of the great modern works of economic, social, political and philosophical thought would have a transformative effect on students' intellectual lives, and thereby on society at large.

We thought this might be broader and more contemporary than just looking at philosophy. Meetings will feature discussion of a topic, agreed by the group, inspired by BBC Radio 4 or maybe a YouTube video. For example, our first meeting of the new session took its inspiration from Radio 4's *In Our Time* on Mercantilism. One of many definitions of this is, "the economic theory that trade generates wealth and is stimulated by the accumulation of profitable balances, which a government should encourage by means of protectionism"!

However grand PPE might sound, the group is just a friendly bunch of individuals who enjoy sharing ideas, and bringing open minds to any discussion. As our group name suggests, we will probably find ourselves wrestling with topics new to us, e.g. mercantilism, and nobody should feel inhibited about joining.

We have scope for a new member or two. If you are interested send an email to [Stuart King](mailto:Stuart.King@u3a.org.uk) or ring him on 07729 409948.

**Keep up to date with Dumfries U3A by visiting:**

<https://u3asites.org.uk/Dumfries>

## U3A Dumfries Camera Group

Joint winners from the latest Camera Group competition:



Above:  
A haffnet fisher  
by Geoff Walker

Left:  
Conor's Girl by  
Bill Walker