

Charity Number SC021683

April 2024 Newsletter

Photo of the Year



Lossiemouth Beach, photographed by Earl Gemmell, recently voted the Photographic Group's Photo of the Year by group members.

This year's u3a Dumfries annual general meeting took place at 2pm on Thursday, March 7th, at the Aberlour North West Resource Centre.

The office-bearers – chair Margaret Moffat, business secretary Jeremy Shearmur and treasurer Kathleen Simpson – were all re-elected. They are joined on the committee – for 2024/5 – by Anne Borrowdale, Barbara Brown, Douglas Maxwell, Alex McEwen and Linda Russell.

The AGM was completed by a talk by Kathleen Simpson on her time living in Shetland (see below).

A Snapshot of Shetland

Kathleen Simpson gave a talk on Shetland, illustrated by photos from the ten years she and her family lived there from 2000 to 2010.



Starting in Lerwick, and highlighting the **Up Helly Aa** celebration, which takes place each January – and during which she and her husband Douglas sometimes acted as ‘Host and Hostess’ at one of the town’s halls – Kathleen then moved south to Sumburgh to look at some of the islands’ wildlife, with images of some of the birds making Shetland their home, such as puffins and guillemots. She described visits to the islands of Fair Isle, Foula and Out Skerries, and the islanders’ way of life there. In their time in Shetland, Kathleen and Douglas also visited the Faroe Islands, travelling on the *Norrøna*, and Kathleen spoke about the cruise ships which visited Lerwick Harbour, via the Sooth Mooth.

Finally, she described the ‘Gannet Hotel’ on the island of Noss, explaining how young gannets leave their nests; and she completed her talk with a memorable Shetland greeting: *Here's ta dee and dy folk fae me and my folk and I hoop that when me and my folk meets dee and dy folk at dee and dy folk is aye blyde to see me and my folk as me and my folk is at seein dee and dy folk.*

Future Newsletters

Items for future newsletters should be sent to:

newsletter.u3adumfries@gmail.com

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Group Updates

Art Appreciation Group

Margaret Smith, the u3a Art Appreciation group leader, writes:

The members of the Art Appreciation Group would be delighted, if you could join us on Saturday 13th April, 2pm, Gallery One, Gracefield Arts Centre, Dumfries.

This is the opening of our own curated art exhibition, entitled '**U3a Art Appreciation Group Collection Choice**'. Each member of the group had the privilege of selecting four pieces of art from the wonderful Gracefield Art Collection, and giving our personal reasons for this. Please, do come along with your family and friends, to see what we have chosen.

To help staff at Gracefield, who are providing light refreshments, it would be helpful if you can please book by phoning 01387 262084.

Franchment Français

Franchment Français meets fortnightly every other Monday from 2-4 pm in members' houses around and outside Dumfries town. We speak some French, and English when our vocab does not stretch far enough. No matter how long ago you took your last exam in French, you may be surprised how much residual ability is

still there, simply awaiting a gentle resuscitation. This writer took his O-level way back in November 1961, so it must have been a good result (actually grade 3, when there were 6 pass grades). so please do not think you will be outshone. None of us are anywhere near mother-tongue fluency, but we all get by and enjoy what we do. You will too. We all prepare a few minutes talk in French which the others respond to – with coffee & biscuits at half-time. To test the water, come along to listen at first and you will soon feel able to contribute. Contact Wesley Paxton at wlpaxton17@gmail.com

Enjoying Music Group

The Enjoying Music Group welcomes new members to their meetings on the second Thursday afternoon of each month. On Thursday, April 11th, we shall be looking back at the 2023 Proms. For our final session of the season, on Thursday, May 9th, the subject will be the comparison of ‘Easy’ with ‘Hard’ Listening. For more information, please contact Bill Todd on eddie14892@gmail.com or at 01387 770340

Non-Fiction Book Group

Jeremy Shearmur lists three of the group’s forthcoming books:
May : Chris van Tulleken’s *Ultra-Processed People* is a striking study by a medical researcher and broadcaster about the harm that certain kinds of ‘ultra-processed’ food may be doing to us. He explains his case well, and documents his argument with extensive references to the scientific literature, but there is a lot about the book which is controversial.

June 7: David Grann’s *The Wager* is a tale of shipwreck, mutiny and murder from the mid-C18.

June 28: Nick Bryant’s *When America Stopped Being Great* is an interesting and very readable discussion – by a former BBC correspondent – of America’s path from Reagan to Trump.

April Monthly Meeting

David Dutton, leader of the History Group, is guest speaker at the April meeting – at 2pm on Thursday April 4th – and he will be providing a portrait of Dumfries’s ‘lost statesman’, Robert Reid QC, the Dumfries Burghs MP from 1886 to 1906, when he was appointed – as Lord Loreburn – the Liberal Government’s Lord Chancellor, with a distinguished career ahead of him.