

The **Clarion** is the Edinburgh U3A magazine and is published bi-annually with contributions from individual members and groups. The **Bulletin** is published monthly on-line and contains brief updates on forthcoming events and group news.



"Modern Life" by Loretta Whitcomb (Art 1)
Pen and watercolour

In this Issue:

Letter from your Chair

Ideas from the Third Age Trust

On Being a EU3A Novice

Daunted & Divided by all things Digital?

Encounters with the Elements

Northern Waters

The Tower of the Winds

Mist

Sea of Cloud.

Poetry corner

Groups.

Historical Walk & Talk

Writing Group 1

Art 1

Photography 1 & 2

Gallery Group 4

Allotment Gardening

In Brief

Current Committee

Editor's Note

Letter from your Chair

Welcome to the Autumn 2020 edition of the Clarion.

Bruce Cowan
Chair, Edinburgh U3A



Thank you for re-joining Edinburgh U3A. I am pleased to say that the vast majority of members have re-joined despite the major restrictions on our activities. A recent survey of our groups indicated that 56 are continuing to operate using Zoom or Skype, while several others use email or WhatsApp.

Some outdoor activity groups such as golf and tennis have resumed, while walking groups are beginning to operate in a restricted way.

In case members were feeling isolated during lockdown, the committee contacted those who are not on email, asking if they would appreciate a regular phone call. We have been phoning the 15 who replied.

We considered reducing the membership subscription this year, but as many of our expenses (printing, postage, Third Age Trust fee, website, membership system, Third Age Matters, etc.) are fixed, and the administration involved in changing would be considerable, we decided not to do this. I am sure you agree that our subscription is remarkable value, and indeed is one of the lowest in the UK.

As you will see from my separate letter/email, the AGM has been cancelled this year. I was due to step down as Chair last June, but will be pleased to hand over to **Richard Peoples** from October. Richard has been a Groups Coordinator, is a Group Leader (Perspectives on Plays) was previously in Cambridge U3A and has experience chairing other bodies. Also stepping down after many years of service is our Assistant Membership Secretary, Sally-Ann Urry. She has spent many hours printing pages and labels, stuffing envelopes, sticking stamps and posting the results. Many thanks to Sally-Ann!

These movements mean that we are looking to recruit a Groups Coordinator and an Assistant Membership Secretary. If you are interested, please let anyone on the Committee know.

Bruce

Ideas from the Third Age Trust

I think that I have looked at the U3A's UK website <https://www.u3a.org.uk/> approximately three times during my 14 years of membership. However, as lockdown moved into its second month, the appeal of spring cleaning, cupboard tidying, tackling jobs that had been put off all winter, began to pall. Any distraction was welcome with pleasure, so I decided to take another look.

This proved to be an excellent idea as there is much to enjoy. The photographs and films from bird watching and gardening groups really did cheer me up on a very wet Edinburgh August day. A play filmed entirely on Zoom was entertaining. I can keep fit with Mr Motivator and then learn the recorder. I can also attempt a weekly maths challenge or try to answer the questions in the weekly quiz. There is an invitation to join a discussion group on amateur radio. After all that and much more there is a course on mindfulness to give me time for reflection.

One of the joys of the site is the positive attitude shown by members. Each month there is a photography competition, *U3A Eye*, the prize is the honour of having your photograph on the website. You don't have to be a member of a photography group to take part and the pictures are very impressive. So too are all the activities taking place on Zoom, though prior to Lockdown few of us had ever heard of it! Now groups use it, among many activities, to play bridge, sing, share their art and creative writing, cookery demonstrations, wine tasting and one group even has a virtual pub!

So if you haven't visited the website recently, now is good time to do it, perhaps a pint or a glass of wine in your hand!

Norma Emm

Jen Renee reflects on **Being a EU3A Novice** at this time.

Retired at long last - joyful, relaxed, expectant. What could be more natural than to join a society that would stimulate my brain, introduce me to new people and generally extend my horizons?

Apprehensively, I ventured into a couple of general meetings but didn't manage to speak to anybody except a lady selling cards (lovely lady!). I attended a meeting for new members and met and chatted to a few people but had no further interaction after that. Not to be discouraged, I read the magazine, perused the groups booklet and after much nervous self questioning, I made contact with a couple of groups. I joined two of them and went to two meetings, feeling quite proud that I had managed to overcome my shyness and enter a room full of people I didn't know.

Then...lockdown! Not a word much used before March this year but now it's common parlance and it affects every walk of life.

From the perspective of a U3A newbie who didn't really know anyone in the organisation and hadn't had time to form new friendships, it was an impenetrable barrier. I felt it was impossible to join a new group under such strange circumstances and the groups I had joined weren't into online interaction. It was very frustrating and I had a severe case of FO-MO 'Fear Of Missing Out' - maybe all the other members were having a high old time in their cheery WhatsApp groups or Zooming merrily away!

Of course, the pandemic and the measures it has incurred have made it more difficult for anyone, even a long established member of U3A to participate fully in the life of the organisation, but for new members, participation has been made even more difficult. Like everyone else I'm greedily anticipating the ending of lockdown and when it happens I will catch up with my erstwhile group members and I resolve to stop dithering and join more groups. Perhaps the lockdown has had a positive effect in rendering an apprehensive novice a bold participant in the life of U3A?

Daunted and Divided by all things Digital?

Over 50 groups have managed to continue to meet virtually and on pages 12 - 17 some of these groups describe how they operated over the summer; but what of the other 150 groups?

The digital world challenges traditional ways of learning and may be the new reality for many, but are some members in danger of being left out intimidated perhaps by the thought of entering an environment which is seen as geeky or male and youth dominated? Maybe that's just not how we want to spend our time.

Time to give technology a try?

It's likely to be months before most U3A groups can meet face-to-face, so many are making use of online technology such as Zoom and Skype to hold meetings or just keep in touch. But a significant number have not taken this step. In some cases it simply isn't practical to meet online. However, some groups could keep their members engaged by taking the plunge and giving technology a try.

EU3A has members who can give one-to-one help to enable groups to get started. Many of us already use the Internet to send and receive emails, for social media and web browsing. It's often said that 'silver surfers' find technology invaluable for keeping in touch with friends and family.

It really is quite simple to use software such as Zoom and Skype – in many cases you only have to click on a link and you can take part in meetings with other members. It will never replace face-to-face meetings, but it's surely better than not meeting at all, and it can be a lifeline for group members who are isolated or have mobility problems.

You can use a computer (PC or Mac) or a tablet or iPad for these meetings. You could even use your phone. Equipment doesn't have to be expensive and it may be possible to borrow it.

If you would like to try the technology – or have queries about how it can help you – please contact Alistair Kilgour and his computer users' support panel at alistairck@gmail.com or call 0131 466 9397.

Richard Peoples

Encounters with the Elements

Northern Waters

Judith Bull describes three weeks on board *Tecla* in the summer of 2016, sailing from Iceland to Scotland via the Faeroes, Shetlands, Orkney and Lewis.



I started sailing as a complete novice in 2010, fell in love with the sea, and have taken as many opportunities as I can since then to explore further. Early retirement beckoned in 2016, so I celebrated with Classic Sailing.

In mid-August I flew to Reykjavik to join *Tecla*, a 1915 Dutch herring drifter, a solidly-built gaff-rigged ketch of 120 tonnes. Apart from the Dutch owners, we were a mixed nationality crew of fourteen, divided into three watches, four hours on, eight hours off.

Leaving Reykjavik at 4am, we made heavy going in worsening weather. I am not usually seasick, but had never encountered the Atlantic in a bad mood before. The thumbprint of an Icelandic low on the weather map became an unpleasant reality. Twenty-two hours and 110 miles later, we took shelter in Heimaey to the south of Iceland and stayed there until the worst of the gale blew through. Our neighbour in harbour was a solitary Frenchman, something of a wandering albatross, on his way home to Nice in a battered 40 foot yacht, having crossed the Atlantic single-handed.

My log for the next two days has very little in it. Stumbling on deck half asleep for a 4am watch, three layers of thermals on, hands freezing to the rail and water sluicing round my feet was an experience I will not forget.

*Left Heimaey 14.30, 500 miles to go
Wind F8, gusting F9/4
Sea state very rough
Heavy rain squalls
Engine, reefed mizzen and staysail, 4 knots*

Almost illegible at the bottom of the page, and underlined "NEVER AGAIN"!!!

The weather eased over the next two days, and we were cheered by fulmars and gannets skimming round the boat, and several sightings of whales. *Tecla* under sail was a different creature, thrumming and creaking, ploughing through the swell with ease.

I was on the dawn watch when we approached the Faeroes, a line of cloud on the horizon over the islands. The Atlantic sunrise had a grandeur and beauty I had been too tired and seasick to appreciate before. Tórshavn reminded me of Tobermory with its colourful houses. Everything reeked of fish, the local boats looked like Viking ships in miniature and fulmars were for sale on the quayside (young fulmars are a seasonal delicacy in the Faroes). The ruins of the old harbour fort were relics of defences against seventeenth century Turkish pirates!



The Faeroes are mountainous islands scraped bare by glaciation, with very little cultivable land. We toured some of the villages, and I was struck by the similarities with both Norwegian houses and Hebridean black houses. Apart from fishing, the local sheep, a leggy, shaggy breed rather like Herdwicks, are vital to the economy. After two days *Tecla* sailed north to the towering cliffs and seabird colonies of Kalsoy.

We dragged anchors that night in a rain and windswept anchorage with vicious downdraught from the cliffs above.

The weather gods were kinder to us on the next leg of the voyage to Shetland. The steady course gave some welcome respite from sail handling, heavy work with a traditional rig, no modern winches and a boom the size of a telegraph pole. Arriving in Unst, the most northerly of the Shetlands, we made a trip ashore to the bird reserve of Hermaness, with wonderful Norse names for all the sea stacks- Flodda, Clingra, Humla, and of course Muckle Flugga, translated as "many birds".

The following day in Lerwick, the museum provided yet more evidence of historic links with Scandinavia. In the evening we sampled the night life of Captain Flint's Bar, very crowded, very noisy, mostly very young, and very bad karaoke. A tour of the island with a local taxi driver, an Asian originally from Amsterdam, was accompanied by a fascinatingly idiosyncratic commentary.



Light winds and bright sunshine took us to Fair Isle under full canvas, an impressive 400 square feet. Even so we were easily outrun by a pod of three orcas. For once Fair Isle lived up to its name, bathed in evening sunlight with fulmars riding the thermals up the sheer cliffs of Sheep Crag.

Our next port was Kirkwall, where we boarded a bus to visit the prehistoric sites and Scapa Flow. An easy run to Stornoway was followed by bad weather again the following day for our final leg to Ullapool. *Tec/a* would continue south and eventually home to the Netherlands, but I left her to go home, taking with me memories good and not so good, and a tremendous respect for the sea and generations of seafarers.

Judith Bull

The Tower of The Winds



One warm afternoon many years ago, as I was wandering through the Plaka district of Athens on my way home from an island holiday, I came across the Tower of the Winds – an octagonal stone monument built as a sundial, water clock, and weather vane in the 2nd - 3rd century BC. On each of its eight sides there is a relief illustrating the weather. Gods threaten hurricanes; hurry ships on their way with strong winds; empty an urn to shower the humans below; pour down hail from a shield; as well as nurturing the fruit and flowers with the warmth of the sun. These reliefs are enchanting with their airy figures and the theme of weather and its effects. This connects our age to theirs, as we too suffer floods and hurricanes, spoiled crops and apple trees bristling with fruit in a good year.

There was no snow in the ancient account and I wondered what the God of proper winter weather would look like transforming the landscape to white. Perhaps an old woman smoothing bare fields with white hands or spitting in our faces with the vehemence of a blizzard.

On the last day of a holiday in Norway, high winds blasted lying soft snow across our tracks in great fingers of drifts leaching white mist like some veiled apparition. The skiing was wonderful: up and over the humps but I needed hat, balaclava, and anorak hood to shield my face and head. The storm continued through the night, but by now I was rolled up in my duvet and almost soothed by the whoosh and buffeting of the wind. I was on the fourth floor – asleep in a tower of the winds.

Jane Bayliss

David Syme sent us two short stories in which the Elements played a part.

Mist: Uncle Jamie's Secret

We were half way up the mountain when a wave of thick mist rolled silently over us. Uncle Jamie, who had been cheerful and chatty, stopped walking and leaned over his trekking poles. "Are you keen to go on?" He asked me. "Of course" I replied, "It will be my 55th Munro. The guidebook says the path is good to the saddle, then we head north until we reach a line of old fence which takes us right up to the summit. The mist shouldn't be a problem. It may even clear and give us a view, you never know." Uncle Jamie growled and pushed off his poles to continue up the path, but he had lost his earlier good mood. I tucked in behind him and, apart from the tapping of the metal poles on rock, we climbed in silence. It was his first mountain walk with me, and it occurred to me that there was much about this old uncle I didn't know. I was aware that he had joined the army in 1957, but then left and moved to Toronto to work in property sales. He had married and divorced twice, and now lived on his own. This was one of his rare visits home, and he had shown a friendly interest in me and my new sport of hill-walking.

We paused at the saddle while I took a compass bearing and checked with the map. From the corner of my eye I watched Uncle Jamie. He had lit a cigarette and was smoking it in an aggressive way, dragging the smoke into his lungs, and cupping the cigarette in a way I had never seen before, his hand furtively covering the glowing tip. He stamped up and down, and I think he was muttering to himself. I had never seen him so agitated before. "OK," I said, "It's this way. Are you happy to go on?" He brushed past me without a word and I hurried after him before he disappeared in the sea of damp grey.

We soon reached a line of old rusty metal posts, with trails of curling red wire; there was no risk of straying from the route to the summit. Uncle Jamie attacked the path with nervous energy; it was clear that something had upset him. The top of a mountain is not a good place to be when your companion is showing signs of being unstable, so I did and said nothing which could push him further off-balance.

A large cairn of granite stones marked the summit. Walkers had sculpted the cairn so that a hollow with stone seats offered shelter on a windy day, and we made ourselves as comfortable as possible. There was no wind that day; the clammy mist swirled eerily round us. While I rummaged in my rucksack for the picnic, Uncle Jamie lit another cigarette. He took a couple of draws, then raised himself so that he could peer over the cairn in all directions. I decided to act normally. "Corned beef and pickle, or cheese and chutney?" Absentmindedly he took the roll nearest to him and bit into it. We ate rolls and chocolate in silence, washing the food down with cold water. When we were finished, I tidied away the bags and fished out the map. "We are not going to have view today, I'm afraid, so we may as well go on. We can either continue north and come down the east ridge or go back the way we came. Which would you like?" Uncle Jamie stared at me before speaking, slowly at first....

"In 1952 we were in Korea. I was in D Company 1st Battalion Black Watch, 18 years old. We arrived there in June, and in July we were ordered to the front. In the night we moved to the top of a hill. It curved in a U shape, and was called Horseshoe Hill. We dug trenches along the summit ridge. Our orders were to hold the position against the Chinese who were advancing towards us. By dawn we had good trenches with interlocking fields of fire, just as we had trained to do in Catterick. We kept watch and slept all day and nothing happened. That night we heard that Chinese troops had been seen nearby, but dawn came without incident. Mid morning the mist came in. Thick, thick mist..." He gestured at the damp gloom around us. His words came faster and his voice rose as the memory became vivid. "We could see nothing, so we listened. At 14.00 hrs we heard rustling and whispering, then a huge fire-fight took place. We knew that they always attacked in vast numbers, so we shot as much ammo as we could until the order came: Cease Firing!"

He paused, and wiped some spittle from his chin. "We stopped firing and all went quiet. Nothing happened for three hours, so we sent out a small patrol and counted our casualties.

We had lost seven men and a further eleven were wounded, four seriously. The patrol came back with the news that the enemy had disappeared. A party was sent out to take care of Chinese casualties, but they returned without finding any trace of the enemy. Next morning the mist lifted and it was evident that there had never been any enemy anywhere near our position. We had been shooting across the horseshoe at ourselves. It was the mist.... that damn mist!" He paused and shook his head, as if deciding what to say and what to leave out. "The Colonel lined up our dead in the middle of the position and made us all file past them." He slumped forward, his head between his hands and sobbed. Then suddenly he raised his head and looked long and hard at the wall of mist behind me, then said in a slow, hoarse voice: "I was the man who fired the first shots."

Sea of Cloud

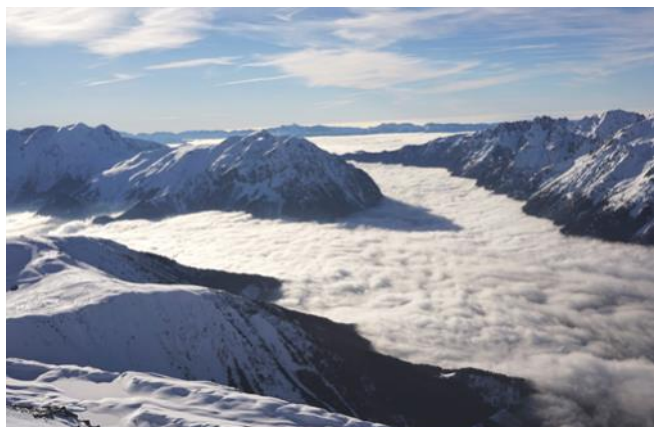
China has three lists of Holy Mountains: the Five Great Mountains, the Four Sacred Mountains of Buddhism and the Four Sacred Mountains of Taoism.

All of these mountains are criss-crossed with well-made roads or paths, and have ancient temples and pagodas on their slopes and summits. None of the mountains is particularly high above sea-level, but all are single peaks or compact clusters which tower above their surrounding land. This isolation is what makes them "holy". They all have a micro-climate which produces the phenomenon which the Chinese call: "Yun Hai" or "Sea of Cloud".

At certain times of the year Chinese people will flock to these mountains to climb to the summit by vehicle, lift or on foot to see the Sea of Cloud at sunrise. They hope that a red sun will rise above an expanse of fleecy vapour, perhaps with a distant peak visible, otherwise pure white. The sun will tint the white and warm the watchers. Cameras will click, "Aaaah..." will be on everyone's lips, and couples might leave a locked padlock on metal fencing to symbolise their love. The Sea of Cloud induces euphoria, an appreciation of natural beauty, a spiritual catharsis – all good reasons for the "holy" epithet.

It happens in Scotland, too, although we don't

do the sunrise climb so much. Hill walkers will show you photos they took on some mountain, perhaps even a humble Pentland Hill, with clouds lapping at their feet like an infinite lake. "Look!" They will say, "Isn't this wonderful!" A fellow walker might nod and mention a sea of cloud he or she once enjoyed on Lochnagar or Ben Lomond. You have to have been there at dawn to experience the best Sea of Cloud effect. The magic comes during the last stage of the ascent, when you emerge from the damp, dark cloud of the lower slopes into a brightening scene of blue with a snowy-white sea receding as you climb higher, as if you are leaving the ugliness of the world to reach a better place.



The euphoria, the "Aaah..." sensation is real, as on the holy mountains of China. Down below life goes on - you might hear a siren or trucks growling up a gradient - but here, for this moment, you have escaped. You have reached a different plane, and forget tiredness, a chafing boot or sore back. You bask, you take pictures, you exchanged joyful greetings with anyone you meet, you scan the horizon like a yachtsman. This is the time for positive thinking and appreciation of what life has to offer. If you are lucky, the cloud might thin down into wisps and slip away, gradually revealing the whole mountain and its surroundings in clear light. leaving a pang of sadness at losing the sense of wonder from experiencing the world from above a sea of cloud.

The Chinese call summits which are known to offer this experience "Holy Mountains", but in the hedonistic West we channel our inspiration into mixing a powerful alcoholic cocktail and calling it "Above the Clouds"!

David Syme

Poetry Corner

Quiet days

Each day the same, or so it seems;
All my best laid plans or dreams
are shelved yet again!

Like dusting or spring cleaning the flat
I just can't believe I want to do that!
So I pick up my book again.

I was going to wash the windows,
Go through my wardrobe, sort my clothes.
But I switch on the TV again.

I intended to sort out my kitchen cupboard,
Throw out old stuff that I seem to hoard!
Instead I put the radio on again.

So I make a list of things to do each day, and
then I decide all I want to do is play, and avoid
my chores again!

Irene Lavery

Lockdown Blues

It's two in the morning and I'm awake
My brain is whizzing; come on gies a break!
Every day the news seems bleak, more sad
stories,
More deaths, folks alone,
I blame the Tories!

But at this time, there are signs of love and
sharing,
Such as good neighbours, supporting and
caring.
Life carries on, I must remember all the good.
Just try to keep well, and not stuff myself with
food!

Irene Lavery

We'll meet again

We'll meet again don't know where don't know when
But I know we'll meet some virus free day
Keep smiling through, though your mask hides the view
And your nice blonde hair is changing back to grey

You can't say "hello" to some folks that you know
Unless you're on Skype or Zoom
You can email or phone but till lockdown is done
You'll be stuck in your home

We'll meet again don't know where don't know when
Until then we're all in isolation
Keep calm and carry on doing things on your own
Just like the whole population.

Some may cook, some may bake, a few scones or some cake
Knit or sew like Mum used to do
Do whatever you may to keep boredom at bay
Now's the time to start something new

We'll meet again don't know where don't know when
At the moment it's company we're craving
So just do your best and cheer on the NHS
And think of the money you're saving.

Doreen Barr

Groups

During the summer, over 50 groups continued their meetings using Zoom, Skype or other on-line meeting formats. Others are now restarting. Here is a sample.

Historical Walk & Talk

It all began with my history teacher at school. He was truly inspirational and made the past come vividly alive. I was hooked from a tender age. During school holidays when most kids went out to play games, I'd be found inside Edinburgh's museums. When I did venture outside, it was to explore my personal playground – the streets and closes of the Old Town.

Fast forward to my late teens when I joined an amateur drama club and got involved in acting, helping backstage and cue writing twelve Scottish historical plays. Decades later, they're still being performed.

Fast forward again to 1993 and an advert that caught my eye from the Edinburgh Festival Voluntary Guides Association, seeking new guides to take Festival visitors down the Royal Mile. This is for me, I decided: a chance to share my knowledge. I only reluctantly stopped when the ever-enlarging Fringe turned the High Street into a no-go zone. Time for something different – weekend guiding on open-top bus tours, an ideal way to expand both knowledge and income, until the tour company decided to "let go" their older guides. Who needs experience? I still had the day job until – wham! – redundancy, a good time to become a volunteer guide for the National Trust for Scotland at the Georgian House in Charlotte Square.

My last flashback takes me to retirement and my wise decision to join U3A. Browsing through the Groups Booklet, I found history groups and walking groups, but nobody leading a combo. Time to put forward my proposal for a new group – **Historical Walk & Talk**. My idea was to lead a season of monthly walks covering different parts of the city. From the outset I was determined to pick out the lesser known and the unusual, with my own sometimes quirky selection of favourite subjects and locations. After five years, I'm still delighted when a group member who has lived in Edinburgh most of their life says "I never knew this was here".

Group numbers are limited to around twelve because of the practicalities of the "talk" bit and that quickly resulted in a permanent double figure waiting list. I was asked by U3A to consider a parallel group – basically a second separate group doing the same thing, so I now lead Historical Walk & Talk Groups 1 and 2.

What do we all get out of it? Personally, I enjoy the exercise for the body, and especially for the mind. Leading a two hour descriptive walk without referring to notes does wonders for the grey cells. No matter how much you think you know, there's always something new to learn. I try to add some fresh discovery to every new season. Sometimes group members surprise me with facts I didn't know, thus starting me on another round of research.

Group members, get lots of facts and stories (occasionally trivial!), plus exercise and fresh air at a time of the year when they might not choose to venture out. They can get to know each other along the way and the walk is rounded off with a social gathering at a purveyor of refreshments.

On the subject of fresh air, we're always at the mercy of Edinburgh's changeable climate. But out of more than fifty walks, I've only had to postpone three times, most memorably for "the beast from the east".

Talking of postponements, when my current season of walks ended abruptly and prematurely with the Covid lockdown, I informed my groups that I intended to restart as soon as Covid regulations permitted, so after splitting each group into two groups of six or less to allow for safe social distancing, I restarted my season in mid-July. The new format worked so well that I'll begin my new season in September with smaller groups, especially because social distancing could be with us for some time. While that might require me to repeat the same walk four times in one month, at least it'll keep me out of mischief.

Alan Richardson

Writing Group 1

During the Covid crisis, Norma Emm's writing group created two group stories where one of us started the story and in turn we each added a paragraph. They were fun to do and we hope that you will enjoy the one below even though it is not great literature!

Group Story

Miss Hamilton, age 91, was the bane of the nursing home where she had long been a resident. She treated the staff as though they were fifth formers in her school. "Girl!" she would call out loudly when she wanted attention not bothering to learn the names of the staff. She was full of complaints about the meals which she felt did not suit her diet. She resented the other residents, who she felt were too noisy. Worst of all, she claimed that she had been left unattended on the commode in her room for nearly an hour. Her complaints were perpetual and she never felt that they were being met.

Sylvie and Jean always managed to take staff break together as they liked to gossip about the residents. "Miss H. is just an unhappy old woman. And wouldn't you be, stuck in this dump." Sylvie took a long drag of her e-cigarette, blowing out the scented vapour which swirled around Jean, who flapped it away, frowning. "She's a pain the bum is what she is. Treats us like muck." "Ah well, maybe she'll like Julie's replacement. He's a Filipino, name of Joshua. Caroline just told me. She looked well chuffed. Thinks it's time there was a man around. Maybe Miss H. will like him." "Huh, like that's gonna happen. Come on, break's over. Back to different smells." Laughing, they went back inside.

"Good morning, Olivia. How are you on this beautifully sunny day?" Joshua beamed as he entered Miss Hamilton's room "Never mind, how am I. I'd like to know who you are!" retorted Miss Hamilton. "And please remember in future to address me by my name, which is Miss Hamilton." Joshua's smile didn't falter as he set about picking up her abandoned reading glasses and discarded pages from The Times "Of course, Miss Hamilton, forgive me. My name is Joshua but you can call me Josh". Miss Hamilton looked at him suspiciously and

then peering a little closer demanded. "Where are you from, young man? Certainly not Edinburgh". Josh laughed, "No, a long way from Edinburgh; I was born in the Philippines." A shadow crossed her face as she murmured, "Cebu city." Josh, startled, replied, "No, not Cebu, I'm from Makati City. Do you know my country?" Miss Hamilton snapped, "Yes, I do know your country, but have no proclivity for reminiscing. Now could you hand me that newspaper. I would like to read the obituaries."

Miss Hamilton always found the obituaries of great interest and would carefully note age and cause of death, although the latter had often to be deduced from the charity suggested in lieu of flowers. From an early age she had enjoyed reading the obituaries in her father's medical journal and approved of the way doctors were so open in the details of final illnesses. She had thought she might have taken up medicine once but her father had put her off. "Not quite the right bedside manner for it, Ollie," he had said and he had probably been right. But today her mind was not on deaths. It kept returning to the graceful young man with the impeccable manners. She rather regretted her terseness with him.

At least he was not from Cebu City; the name Hamilton might not be as well known in Makati, in the heart of the capital, hundreds of miles from Cebu. She regretted letting slip the fact that she knew the Philippines – he was bound to be curious. The next time he came to her room she would tell him that she had travelled widely in the Far East. If he pressed her about the Philippines she would say that her memory was hazy. In fact, her memory of the years in Cebu City remained achingly clear. She stared at the window for a moment and shuddered. Well-wishing friends back then told her that time is a great healer of emotional wounds but.... Not in this case. The image of Harry's crumpled body on the blood-soaked bedroom carpet would never leave her. It had happened forty-five years ago and since then her fascination with death had never left her. She knew Harry's obituary in the Times by heart: *"17th October 1975 Cebu City, Philippines Henry Joseph Barrymore (Harry) much love husband of Olivia, nee Hamilton. Cause of death unknown."*

Donations please to Cancer Research."

That "unknown" part had cost a great deal of money; rumours flew around the expat community, of course - Harry had been a well known figure. Miss Hamilton sighed and focussed once more on projecting her stuffy old maid image.

With this in mind, she telephoned down to Caroline the Manager the following morning. "Never send that foreign young man to my room again," she said sharply. "It's quite inappropriate for a lady like me to be tended by a male in intimate circumstances. Even that slattern, Jean, would be preferable." But Caroline, who had been patient for years, had had enough. "Joshua is highly qualified and comes to us with the best of references," she told the cantankerous old woman. "There are male nurses in all wards in hospitals these days, and even male midwives. I'm afraid I can't make exceptions for one client. And I won't have you calling my hard-working carers names like 'slattern!'" It was Joshua who came to check that she had all she needed later that morning, but there was a subtle difference in the way he spoke to her now. Had Caroline warned him to be firm with her, or had he already begun to unravel her secret?

"Would you like a cup of tea, Miss Hamilton?" Joshua was tentative – not his usual beaming self at all. When Caroline had called him to her office, she'd looked up at him wearily: "Josh, when even you can't make a dent in Olivia's armour, then I think that we need a different approach. We'd tiptoed around her long enough. So be gentle – but FIRM with her. Understand?"

Josh nodded reluctantly. He placed great store on being able to bring round even the most tiresome resident. To the casual visitor, and sad to say, to some of the home's carers too (Sylvie and Jean popped unbidden into his mind) their residents were ancient, smelly and hard work. But Josh usually managed to ferret out something about their defining years that made them feel valued again. Was Miss Hamilton hiding her light under a bushel? Would a memento of her heydays do the trick?

"Pop, when you were a reporter for the Manila Times, you spent some time in Cebu City, didn't

you?" It was his weekly Skype catch up with the family in Makati. "Can you get hold of one or two relevant pages of *"From the Past"* from the Archives. I have a resident here, Olivia – Olivia Hamilton. She's having trouble settling in. I have a feeling she knows Cebu City quite well.....".

"I don't need to look up *"Pages From the Past"* Josh, I was there in Cebu City at that time and that particular story kept the gossip mongers busy for weeks." Josh smiled, just as he had thought: a scandal most probably involving divorce.

"Your Miss Hamilton was known as Mrs Barrymore at that time. Quite good looking in that British slightly insipid way. Her personality matched her looks, she was a very timid woman. Harry Barrymore was years older than her and a really nasty man with an enormous inferiority complex, disliked equally by the expats and the locals. Rumour had it that he and Olive (she must have thought Olivia sounded grander when she returned to Scotland) were not married. Rather she was his housekeeper, but one who provided additional services! Whatever the truth was she managed to inherit his estate which actually didn't amount to much as Harry was pretty low down in the pecking order."

"You couldn't help feeling sorry for him though, when he fell seriously ill with cancer. A few kind souls visited him and said that he was treating Olive dreadfully, shouting and swearing at her and the poor woman was in tears most of the time. But you know Josh, the Brits have a saying about the worm turning and in my view, and that of the press room, that is what happened. A servant disappeared the night Harry was stabbed. He was never found, but years later in Manila I am sure that I spotted him coming out of a very swish hotel."

"You think he was paid to disappear and that Miss Hamilton murdered her husband?" Josh was incredulous. "Well" his dad continued, "I don't think anyone would have blamed her. The British love a scandal just as much as the rest of us except when they are abroad and are the cause of it!"

Art 1

Encounters With The Struggle To Create Something - Anything.

Under the lively leadership of Clare Thornton, U3A Art 1 flourished. Then came lockdown. As of now (June) I am pleased to say that the group is still flourishing. United by email, we have been busy painting and drawing, posting the results on line for encouragement and comments. We have had a spontaneous 'Where is this?' Competition of work done from photos of places at home and abroad. I entered a watercolour of a line of washing blowing on a quayside and one person even claimed to recognise the washing!

Work started in ordinary meetings has been finished and garden flowers and household objects have made welcome subjects. To my eye, there have been definite improvements in technique. Some of us have felt a little down occasionally and it's been hard for those shielding, but we're all there for each other and hope to meet up - if not in September-sometime in the not too distant future.

Here's a taste of some of our lockdown artwork.

Loretta Whitcomb



"Victoria Street" Alan McKinney



"Mad Hatters Tea Party" Clare Thornton



"Bridget Riley Wild Cat" Loretta Whitcomb (watercolour and gouache)



"Bella" Clare Thornton

Photography 1 & 2



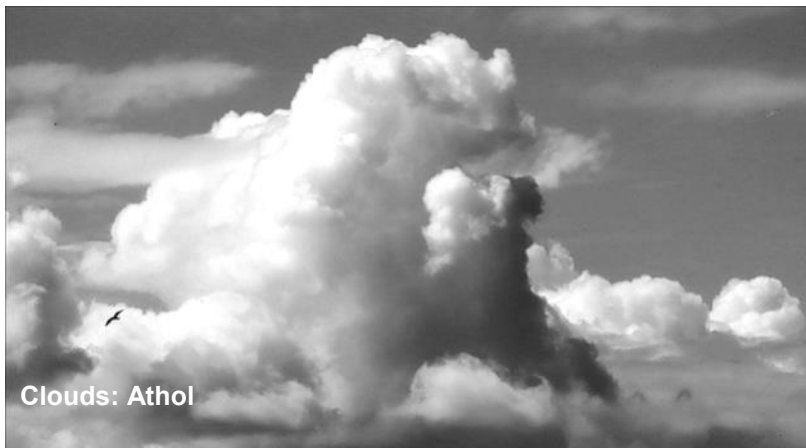
Photograph by Neil

We continued our monthly meetings using Skype principally because there is no time limit. We need about 90 minutes for our session and I thought it would be disruptive to split it into two halves. Also, video and audio quality seems better with Skype as was confirmed in the recent survey by "Which." We selected a few photographs that reflected the "Elements"

Neil & Sonia Duffy



Morag



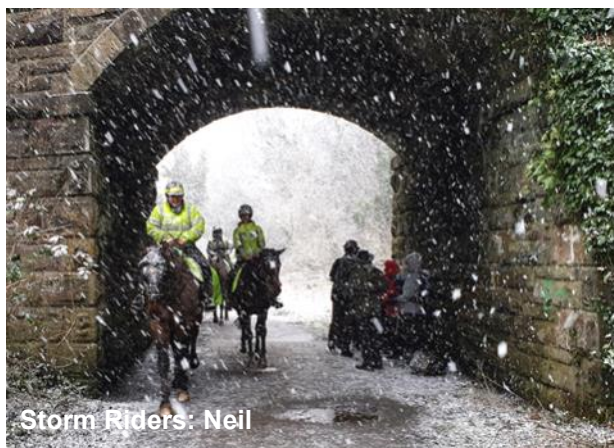
Clouds: Athol



Carina



Lindisfarne Reeds: Sandra



Storm Riders: Neil



Sonia

Gallery Group 4

In April our group leader, Susan Whitehead, asked if any of us would be interested in moving the group to Zoom meetings online. With few other options for social engagement at the time I thought I had nothing to lose so signed up. Our first "meeting" was on 21 April and we have continued every Tuesday afternoon since.

Early sessions considered current online exhibitions such as those at the Royal Scottish Academy. We looked through the art works and each person selected two pieces they liked and explained why they had made that choice to the rest of the group. Having to pick two images made us look closely at the exhibition and the subsequent discussion encouraged us to look in more depth at those exhibits we might have otherwise flicked past.

There has been no pre-set plan of what we look at. An interest in one artist or movement one week has suggested the topic for the following week. We have ranged widely from Beryl Cook (to lift our spirits), Paul Henry (Irish post Impressionist), John Henry Lorimer, Pablo Picasso, Joan Eardley, the French

Impressionists, Scottish Colourists and Australian Impressionists. We spent a couple of weeks looking at works in the outstanding collection at Kirkcaldy Art Gallery. We have taken it in turns to research specific artists and have learned much in the process. The hard part of managing the meeting and bringing specific images to our screens has been ably managed by Susan. Many thanks Susan!

If there is a downside for me, looking at works of art on a small screen in no way replicates seeing an original full sized work, appropriately lit in a real art gallery. The sense of hushed anticipation when walking into the gallery and the wow factor are completely missing. The colour of images on screen can look faded and washed out and you get no sense of scale.

Private galleries are already open and some of the major public galleries are due to reopen soon (fingers crossed). I know it will probably be some time before we can restart our group visits but at least we will be able to visit as individuals. In the meantime the Zoom group will continue and I'm off to the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam!

Sheila Hindshaw

The Allotment Gardening Group

We had already bought all our seeds and onion sets when "Lockdown" was declared and as the City of Edinburgh and the Duddingston Glebe Project, of which we are part, decided to keep their allotments open, so did we!

We are quite a small group, so we used "WhatsApp" to keep in touch and let the rest of

the "socially distanced" group know when we were intending to visit. Watering was a popular form of "exercise" on the hot sunny days and the onions are huge!

In addition to our raised beds (thank you Chris) we also have a new sign advertising U3A (thank you Honora) and two wormeries (thank you Richard).



May 2020 Photo Pete Beckett



July 2020



In Brief

New Nurses

Dear readers, especially those of us who were in nursing, have you found on "All 4" the Danish drama called "**New Nurses**"? Set in the 1950's, it is about the Danish Government's decision to allow men to enter nurse training. Here in the UK we had, since the early 20's, allowed some men to be placed on a separate register of general training, but largely men were part of the Army Training Corp. In 1949, all General Trained Nurses were placed on a single register.

Why, perhaps you are asking, is this of interest to us? Please let me share the sheer pleasure of this programme. I entered nursing in 1959 and this Danish experience is full of memories. To give you a flavour: the first words said to the would-be students were, *"We have a thing about cleanliness here. You will wash frequently and your hair at least once every three weeks. You will keep the patients clean and the wards clean."* Does it not make your heart sing? I remember a whole morning in a lecture about cleanliness and the teacher saying, *"There is nothing worse for a patient than to be handled by a nurse with BO"*. Like all of you, I could write a book on the need for excessive hygiene in hospitals. I am with Florence Nightingale, cleanliness is next to godliness. I suspect she never said any such thing but the sentiment is absolutely right.

Enjoy. Hope there are many of you out there that have wonderful stories to share. Meanwhile, enjoy the film from Denmark.

Louisa Page

Our 1901 Postal Pensioners - a Learning Project for U3A

Addressing Health is a three year project funded by the Wellcome Trust that looks at the health of postal workers from 1859 to 1908. The Post Office was a major national organisation with 167,000 employees by 1900. It was part of the Civil Service and established pensions and sick pay as early as the 1850s. It had started its own medical service in 1855 with a small permanent staff. This carried out duties such as examining fitness for office and

certifying sickness at work.

The Post Office kept detailed records of sickness and causes of retirement for its employees. Drawing on these records, on death certificates and on census records for the period 1861 to 1901, the **Addressing Health** project will examine a variety of social and medical questions. U3A members can help in this project - **Our 1901 Postal Pensioners** - by providing information about individuals from this period. The research will concentrate on approximately 100 post office workers from Northern Ireland, Scotland and South West England. 1901 is the first year in which a full census is available.

Full instructions and training will be given, the research will be done at home and, hopefully, by meetings to share experiences. The project would be of interest to anyone who has researched their own family, had a relative employed by the Post Office or anyone interested in social history.

For further information look at

www.addressinghealth.org.uk

Contact: Jennifer Simpson, National SLP

ZOOM IN TO DRAMA!

A free Introduction to Playwriting course using Zoom

Do you have an idea for a play but don't know how to get it on its feet?

Have you been watching some of the recent talking heads on TV and would like to write one yourself?

Would you like to learn some of the skills of playwriting and meet live actors?

Would you like to see professional actors bringing your words to life?

Yes? Then this new course from U3A and Citadel Arts Group is for you.

**Join us on for a taster first meeting on
SEPTEMBER 3rd 2020 at 2pm on ZOOM.**

If you enjoy the experience, then join a free four-week series of interactive workshops on Zoom.

For more info or to register for the taster session, contact Liz Hare (Citadel Arts Group): lizhare@blueyonder.co.uk



Current Committee

Chair: **Bruce Cowan** (Acting until Sept)
 Chair: **Richard Peoples** (Acting from Oct)
 Vice Chair **Ann Keating**
 Treasurer: **Hugh Young**
 Secretary: **Jonathan MacQueen** (Acting)
 Internal Communications: **Bruce Cowan**
 Membership: **Ann Ryan**
 Group Coordinator 1 (Groups A-C):
Doreen Barr
 Group Coordinator 2 (Groups D-I):
Keith Guy
 Group Coordinator 3 (Groups J-P):
Joanna Morris
 Group Coordinator 4 (Groups Q-S)
Vacant
 Group Coordinator 5 (Groups T- Z):
Louise Grimm

New Members: **Sheila Harvey**
 External Communications: **Patrick Leach**
 Technical Support: **Andrew Robertson**
 Webmaster: **Chris Newman**
 Safeguarding Officer: **Jane Garrett**

Others behind the scenes

Assistant Membership 1: **Vacant**
 Assistant Membership 2: **Graham Golding**
 Assistant Treasurer: **Jenny Clarke**
 Assistant Technical support: **Alan Mathieson**
 Groups Information: **Lachlan Paterson**
 Monthly Meetings Speakers: **Cathy Balfour**
 Bulletin Editor: **David Baird**
 Clarion Editor: **Maggie Gilvray**
 Volunteers: **Tricia Allan**
 Assistant Webmaster: **Jean Knox**

Editor's note

We have a slightly shorter edition of Clarion this time as there were no visits or monthly meetings to report on, and no shared lunches to look forward to at the present time. A big thank you to all those who contributed articles and photos for this edition. We had even more contributions this time, so apologies if we had to leave out some articles. This might seem like a contradiction but due to the technicalities of printing, we have to have pages in multiples of 4 i.e. 16 or 20!

We are always pleased to receive articles for publication: Remember, it's **your** magazine and everyone can have a story to tell - amusing or thought provoking, factual or imaginative.

For the next edition, due out in March 2021 we are looking for your articles and anecdotes on **"Wildlife."**

Contributions and any comments should be sent, by **mid- January**, preferably by email, to clarion@edinburghu3a.org.uk

Guidance

Roughly 225 - 300 words (half A4 page) or 500 – 600 words (full A4 page) will give an article of

the right length accompanied by good quality and interesting photographs. Shorter notes on group activities are equally acceptable. Articles should be saved as a Microsoft Word compatible document such as a *rich text* or *plain text* file or just send in an *e-mail*. (Click on *save as* and select appropriate format) Don't worry about fonts or text formatting. These are easily changed, but if you include photographs, these should preferably be sent as a separate image file (JPEG or TIFF) rather than embedded in articles or e-mails as these might be compressed so much their resolution is too low for publication.

I am most grateful to the "editorial team" - **Norma Emm, Jen Renee** and **Fiona Smith** - for their continuing support and **Joanna Morris** for proof reading.

Further information on themes and guidance for the **Spring 2021 edition** will be available in the Bulletin and on the Website.

Paper version. If you want a paper version of this magazine, please contact the membership Secretary, Ann Ryan

Clarion is produced by The Edinburgh University of the Third Age, Scottish Charity Number SC020301 and printed by Dupliquick, 22a Great King's Street, Edinburgh EH36QH