



Clarion is the magazine of Edinburgh u3a and is published bi-annually with contributions from and about individual members and groups. The **Bulletin** is published monthly on-line and contains brief updates on forthcoming events and group news.



Skies: Patricia, Eu3a photography

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Richard Peoples

Chair, Edinburgh u3a



It's been a long wait... but as most Covid restrictions have been lifted, Edinburgh u3a can, at last, start to return to something like normality. Groups can now meet in members' homes and in all our usual public venues, and we can plan 'live' monthly meetings and get-togethers for new members. Some of us are understandably a little nervous about meeting face-to-face while the virus is still with us, so some groups will meet online for the time being while others are planning 'hybrid' meetings, where some participants can take part online.

Throughout the u3a movement, membership numbers have dropped as a result of the pandemic – in some u3as by as much as 20 per cent or more. I'm pleased to say that Edinburgh u3a has had a lower-than-average drop in numbers, and we have continued to recruit new members – 152 in the current membership year. We welcome the new members and look forward to them playing an active part in our activities.

Many of us have become used to meetings on Zoom, Skype and other online platforms. Though they can never replace face-to-face contact, these have at least enabled members who are unable to attend 'live' meetings to take part online. Group leaders have been doing an excellent job in keeping in touch with members who do not have access to the Internet. As u3a is a lifeline for many of us – especially those living alone – these contacts have been much appreciated.

One of the successes of the lockdown period has been *u3a: Online Across Scotland*, an initiative by Edinburgh and other Scottish u3as to establish online groups and courses which are open to members throughout Scotland. So far there are 23 groups and courses, and we expect more to join them soon. Subjects covered range from French, German and Climate Emergency to Crafty Ukulele, Sustainable Sewing and Laughter Yoga. You can find more details on the u3a Online Across Scotland website

We restarted our programme of monthly meetings with guest speakers in April, using Zoom and making a recording available to those unable to take part on the day. We've had some excellent speakers and attendance has been encouraging – so much so that we're thinking about running 'hybrid' monthly meetings in future. We'll also continue to provide recordings.

Our AGM had to be delayed because of Covid and is now planned to take place on 20th October following the monthly meeting – details will follow.

Several of the Edinburgh committee members are coming to the end of three or six years on the committee, so we will be looking for members who may be interested in replacing them.

We hope you will be able to join us at our monthly meetings and the AGM. In the meantime, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Edinburgh committee and our group leaders for all their hard work in keeping our u3a going during this most difficult time.

Richard Peoples

Third Age Trust

The Third Age Trust has an elected Trustee from each of 12 "Regions" in the UK: 9 Regions of England plus the three nations, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.



Ann Keating

Ann Keating, our Vice Chair, is the Scottish Trustee and helps to keep us up to date with u3a events beyond Edinburgh city boundaries.

The UK wide u3a have pages of inspiring news about what other u3as and individual members have been up to <https://www.u3a.org.uk/latest-news>

Did you know that in June, u3as up and down the country celebrated the first national u3a Day? East Renfrewshire got into the community spirit by going litter-picking in high-vis jackets adorned with the u3a logo. Elsewhere, u3a members are gearing up to get involved with **Slow Ways** this summer, a national initiative to map safe, direct walking routes between towns and villages.

Where were you Edinburgh?

While the Trust's finances are in a good state, there has been a fall in membership, partly as a result of Covid, so look out for various initiatives aiming at recruiting new members.

The u3a celebrates its **40th anniversary** next year. Events are already in the pipeline, including an anniversary quilt competition. Members are asked to submit a square and judges will select 40 that they feel best represent the movement's message on **positive ageing**. Any u3a member or group can enter. The deadline is 15 November, 2021. For more details, go to the u3a 40th Anniversary tab in the Events section at www.u3a.org.uk.

Scottish u3a News

The Scottish u3a has been busy!

There are 54 member u3as in Scotland ranging in size from Edinburgh with over 2000 members to small groups on some islands. A telephone survey of all these u3as during the past year showed a

mixed picture with many coping well with lockdown and interest groups taking place online, but smaller and remoter u3as are not doing so well. Their membership is often ageing and less happy to engage with technology.

u3a: Online Across Scotland continues to grow and now has well over 20 interest groups running. This network is open to all Scottish u3a members at no extra cost and is likely to continue after Covid restrictions are lifted. The format is particularly suited to small groups who are unable to attract enough local members, and remote members facing long journeys to meet up. Language groups seem to be the most popular and some are already full, but there are still plenty of spaces available in other groups. An archaeology interest group will start in September with 72 participants from all over Scotland led by Michael Hutchings. The Climate Emergency Group are very active and are hoping to participate in some way in COP 26 in Glasgow in November. Richard Peoples' theatre group in conjunction with Citadel Arts, had a successful play writing and performance event. (see page 9) There are also talks on line including Dr Hermione Cockburn from Dynamic Earth who gave a fascinating talk on "*Discovery: the Deep*" in June, check out <https://u3asites.org.uk/onlineacrossscotland/home>

The **Borders Network** is quickly taking shape under the leadership of Maria Chester. She is inviting Berwick to take part so this will be a cross border group. The **Central Belt network** continues to operate very successfully with 27 groups taking part in online meetings, sharing ideas and resources and supporting one another.

U3a Scotland (Ann Keating) and Edinburgh u3a (Keith Guy) are members of the **Scottish Older People's Assembly** (SOPA) a charity part funded by the Scottish government to promote equality with the aim of giving a strong voice to older people and celebrating the positive contribution that older people can make to society. The u3a and SOPA are hoping to have a joint conference in the autumn. Positive Ageing and older peoples' health and care are possible subjects for discussion.

Ann Keating

Know your Apple from your Android

Alistair Kilgour explains some of the basics

For many, technology has been of significant help in mitigating the worst impacts of lockdown, in particular the sense of isolation. The telephone, of course, has remained a vital means of contact with friends and family, but the addition of video, being able to see as well as hear, is a huge bonus in overcoming distance and enhancing the sense of connection. In the u3a in particular, group meetings have been able to continue using videoconferencing, at least for those with the necessary hardware and the willingness to venture into the unknown.

So what do you need, and what does it give you? Well, firstly you need a **device** of some kind to be able to access online services. This can be a “smart” mobile phone, a tablet, a laptop or desktop computer.

“**Smart**” mobile phones include iPhones, made by Apple, but also those made by a wide range of other manufacturers. These latter are usually based on a system called **Android**, so generically are often just referred to as Android phones. Similarly with tablets: the iPad is just Apple’s version, but there are lots of others including Toshiba, Samsung and Amazon, and almost all are based on a variant of the Android system.

Laptop and desktop computers can also be divided into two main categories, Apple and non-Apple. Most non-Apple computers run on **Microsoft’s Windows** operating system (OS). Apple computers constitute only a small minority of the personal computers, though you might not get that impression from what you see on TV, where almost everyone seems to be using a device with that Apple logo! Each system has strengths and weaknesses and each has their proponents but it is worth remembering that they don’t always communicate well with each other!

In order to be able to access online services, your device needs to be able to connect to the **internet**. The internet is that global mesh of specialised computers (servers) which make possible the fast transmission of huge amounts

of data across oceans and continents: truly a modern wonder. Access to the internet for most users is via a “**router**” usually rented from an Internet Service Provider (**ISP**) such as BT, Virgin Media, TalkTalk etc. The connection of devices to the router can be either by cable (ethernet) or more commonly by “**WiFi**”. Smart phones can connect to the internet either by WiFi to a router within range, or elsewhere using the mobile phone network, which is a considerable advantage over other portable devices when away from home.

Email is the oldest of online services, and has been around for a lot longer than the modern internet. But a great many powerful modern services are built, directly or indirectly, on top of the wonderful **World Wide Web**, which allows “pages” of information to be accessed through their address (“Universal Resource Locator” **URL**) or commonly just a link such as that below. These services now include **YouTube**, a rich and varied collection of sound and video clips, **BBC Sounds** and **iPlayer** giving access to extensive audio and video archives, and most wonderful of all, **Wikipedia** (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page), an online encyclopaedia available in many languages as well as English, and being continually extended and updated by its users across the world.

And so to **Zoom**, which until the beginning of the pandemic was known only to a relatively small number of business users. Its impact during the pandemic has been truly transformative, though there were many precursors, and there are now many rivals, among them **Skype** (now owned by Microsoft, offering full video conferencing); **Google Duo** (built-in to most Android phones, most suited to one-to-one video calls); **WhatsApp** (again targeted initially at Smart phones though also usable on tablets and laptops); **Google Meet** (technically a good match for Zoom); and, one I would put in a special word for, **Jitsi Meet** (<https://meet.jit.si/>), a totally free system which can be accessed directly from any web browser, with apps for iPads, iPhones and Android devices.

Know your Apple from your Android (Cont'd.)

If you have still to take the plunge, and you don't already have a tablet or laptop, your first step is to choose a device. Though videoconferencing on a phone is possible, an 8" or 10" tablet would be the minimum investment, either an iPad or one of the many non-Apple alternatives. There is a lot of help available, including from our own **Computer Users Support Panel**, and we are now back in the happy situation where home visits are once again possible. It's quite ironic that now u3a groups may, if they wish, resume meeting face to face in each other's homes, a lot may well choose to continue with online meetings, at least some of the time.

Alistair Kilgour

MOOCs and Hens



I've been meaning to get into MOOC-learning for ages. For anyone new to this, MOOC is the acronym for *Massive Open Online Course*. There are thousands of free short courses delivered by many universities and colleges world-wide. Courses typically require a few hours of study each week for about 5 weeks. The range of subjects offered is phenomenal. Have a look here: <https://www.futurelearn.com/>

Despite having eclectic interests, and a strong desire to keep my cognitive functions intact, a choice of what to study was a problem.

Psychology perhaps? Astrobiology? How to write a novel? Intellectual Humility? Maybe not. I decided on "Chicken Behaviour and Welfare" from Edinburgh University for my first MOOC.

Living in a second-floor flat in Polwarth with a shared back green does not afford a great deal of opportunity to set up a chicken run. Although we have an allotment plot a few miles away I'm stymied there because Edinburgh Council doesn't allow any livestock. (Probably just as well because we have an emaciated-looking resident fox.) But my daughter does have chickens on her smallholding near Walkerburn. These hens are beautiful, inquisitive, and docile. I'm told that their behaviour is complex, not always rational, and often very amusing. All good reasons to know more about them. The eggs are very tasty too.

The "*Chicken Behaviour and Welfare*" MOOC is delivered by Dr Victoria Sandilands of Scotland's Rural College, delivered for the most part in short videos from inside her chicken shed, with chicks pecking and chirping in the background, and Dr Sandilands there in her boiler suit. Seemingly casual, this is nevertheless a detailed examination of a complex practical and unusual academic subject, and all the better for being at home with the hens. The course is full of information on chicken evolution, behaviour, physiology, and ethical obligations and welfare standards. Could there be anything else you need to know about chickens?

The course is an excellent and engaging production. The thousands of people who have studied on this course seem to be very happy with it too. Thousands? Yes, almost unbelievable: more than 24,000 people have studied *Chicken Behaviour and Welfare*. I really don't know what to think about that; I'll ponder it while I have a couple of poached eggs on toast for breakfast: Burford Browns, they must be good layers!

And yes, there really is a MOOC on Intellectual Humility.

Anon.

Monthly Meetings

In this edition we don't have full reports of monthly meetings for those who can't be there in person, as the Zoom format and video recordings have allowed access to many of you. Typically, well over 200 people have been able to attend each of these meetings but, of course, this doesn't provide the same opportunity to meet and share tea with old friends. However, it is likely that this format will continue until the end of the year, after which we are looking at some form of "hybrid" meeting with members meeting both in person and online.

Over the past few months we have enjoyed several talks including one from **Alison Kinnaird MBE** in June. Alison lives and works in Temple, Midlothian and, apart from being a very accomplished harpist, her glass engraving can be seen in public and private collections worldwide. Her work varies from small, intimate pieces to large architectural commissions and combines ancient engraving traditions with modern techniques and lighting to explore contemporary subjects. If you missed this talk, she would welcome visiting groups to her studio in Temple by appointment. There is a video "Art in Glass" available at <https://www.alisonkinnaird.com/artinglass2021-openstudioexhibition> which accompanied her studio exhibition in August of this year.

She also mentioned the following workshops: [Lindean Mill Glass](#) – where you can watch David Kaplan and Annica Sandstrom blow glass and [Glasslab Edinburgh](#) – Jeff Zimmer and David Mola run classes in all sorts of glass techniques, and do beautiful work themselves.

2019 marked 100 years of Council Housing in Scotland. On June 16th, **Stephen Robb** from Historic Environment Scotland looked at the dream to build houses fit for returning war heroes and address some of the issues of the day – poor health, the failure of the private housing market and political unrest.

In May, Edinburgh U3A member **Hillary Sillitto** and one of his co-authors, Ian Godden, stepped in at short notice to lead a lively discussion on their book '*Scotland 2070 Healthy, Wealthy and Wise: an ambitious vision for Scotland's future – without the politics*'. This identifies a thriving, prosperous long-term future for Scotland. The book blends story and factual narrative to offer '*a tremendous read, with uncharacteristic Scottish vision and confidence*'.

On April 21st, **Bernard Lockett** spoke about "The Heritage of Gilbert and Sullivan".

For future meetings we have the following speakers lined up:-

September 15th. Francoise Robertson, a Holocaust baby, will talk about her long and varied life doing things that were frowned on by the social norms of the day.

October 20th. (AGM). Ian Deary will give a talk entitled "*Ten Quite Interesting Things About Intelligence*." Ian is a Scottish psychiatrist and Professor Emeritus of Differential Psychology at the University of Edinburgh. He is known for his work in the fields of human intelligence, the effects of ageing on cognition, and the reciprocal association between intelligence and health in the human life course. He is former Director of the Centre for Cognitive Ageing and Cognitive Epidemiology, co-Director of the Alzheimer Scotland Dementia Research Centre and founding Director of the Lothian Birth Cohort Studies. In his spare time, he is singer, saxophonist, and songwriter with the electro-pop band "*Dancing Mice*." He was awarded an OBE for services to the social sciences in the 2019 New Year's Honours.

November 17th. Calum Rodger will talk on '*From Stonypath to Little Sparta: A Poet's Garden*'. Calum Rodger is a Glasgow-based poet, performer, editor and researcher. His publications include *Occasional Poems 2012–2019*, *PORTS* and, as editor, *Makar/Unmakar: Twelve Contemporary Poets in Scotland*. He is Co-Director of the Scottish Universities' International Summer School based at the University of Edinburgh, and holds a PhD in Scottish Literature from the University of Glasgow for his research on the work of Ian Hamilton Finlay, which he looks forward to sharing at this talk with us.

December 15th. Christmas Concert. Expect the usual potpourri of surprises!

A Fantasy Holiday

Fifties Lodge

Our daughter and son and their young families live a long way away from us and each other, and we had been looking for a place for a joint holiday where horizontal and vertical family bonding could take place.

One of my walking group told me about *Fifties Lodge*. It's a self-catering lodge by the side of a loch, deep in a Highland glen. You reach it by driving 11 miles along a private track. There is no other dwelling anywhere near.

It has running water and electric lighting from a generator which starts at 6am and cuts out at 10pm. There are 7 bedrooms, a huge lounge with a picture window, a dining room and a large kitchen with Calor gas. Best of all, she said, there is no Wi-Fi, no TV and only an emergency phone. I was hooked!

To spend a week there would need careful advance planning. We grandparents would send the invitation and would pay for it, but we reckon it is now time for us to step back from the organiser role, so we would let the youngsters get on with it. We would try to sell the idea of a week without electronic gadgets and concentrate on finding our own amusements.

The area is noted for birdwatching, there are canoes and rowing boats for fishing, and the surrounding hills make excellent walking.

I wrote to the estate factor and the reply told me that the lodge was booked solid for the next two years by family groups like ours. I can only dream about what might have been.....

The Island

The trawler skipper leaned over the side and shouted down to me: *"We'll be back in 6 days for you. Are you sure you don't want to hang on to your phone?"* "No thanks," I replied, *"You keep it, please. A week without it will do me the world of good."*

I pushed off, fitted my oars and rowed to the island, watching as the trawler headed for the fishing grounds near the Faroes.

The long-range forecast was good and I was looking forward to a few days of solitude; wild camping, some sea fishing and exploring an uninhabited island between North Uist and Harris.

One of our elderly patients came from Harris. He told me about this island, where his family used to land a few sheep every spring. "There's a fine beach on the east shore," he said, his eyes misty as he pictured it, "There used to be a wee spring with sweet water, but no-one has been there for years. I want to get better so that I can go there."

After he died this island had become fixed in my mind. When work permitted a short break, I would flop into an armchair, close my eyes and see the water lapping on the sand, hear oystercatchers peeping as they flew over rocks, feel the Hebridean breeze on my face.... And now, here I was; ahead of me the 6 days of my dreams.

My borrowed rowing boat had space for camping gear, food and water, and the luxuries I had brought – binoculars, a bird book, fishing tackle and several books that I had been promising to read for months. With every pull of the oars I felt that I was drawing away from the crazy covid world of work and city life. This was my first break in a year; admissions to our wards were down and I had kept going longer than most, giving priority to those with families and commitments.

The sand crunched as the boat slid up the beach. I splashed ashore and pulled the boat up to the high-water mark. It did not take long to complete a survey of the island – a narrow strip with a craggy spine, a ruined croft, some straggly bushes, otherwise heathland of thin grass and heather. At the southern tip a platform of short grass offered an excellent campsite; what could go wrong

David Syme

David invites readers to use their own imagination as to how the island story develops.

Down South Jukin'

Alan Fairley

"What is the purpose of your visit to the United States?"

The question was asked, not of me, but of the lady in front of me in the immigration queue at Atlanta airport.

"I'm here to see the ghost of Elvis" she replied, at which the stern faced immigration clerk's countenance almost broke into a smile as he stamped her passport and waved her through. That was clearly her fantasy holiday – my expectations were somewhat less dramatic. However my trip to the Deep South of America encompassed pretty much every musical dream I'd held ever since I'd heard, as a 15 year old, Eric Clapton's stratospheric guitar solo on Badge (If you know the song, you'll know what I mean).



The seeds to this adventure were sown as my partner Eleanor and I discussed our impending 60th birthdays. We were both scheduled to reach that milestone within five weeks of each other and were going through the time honored ritual of trying to work out suitable birthday presents, when Eleanor produced a newspaper advert in which an escorted 10-day trip to the music cities of New Orleans, Memphis and Nashville was offered.

Decision made. Forget about buying each other presents, lets celebrate our joint attainment of sexagenarian status in Dixieland.– and we did.

After escaping that particular corner of hell known as the immigration hall in Atlanta airport, we headed for an overnight stop in Montgomery, Alabama, taking the opportunity of viewing monuments to civil rights activist Rosa Parks and

country music legend Hank Williams, merely a taster before the lengthy trip through the Louisiana swamplands to New Orleans. The "Big Easy" is a musical fantasy in itself with pop-up jazz bands on every corner and famous sites from movie scenes wherever you turn (who could forget the 'whose funeral is it?' scene on Bourbon Street in the James Bond epic Live and Let Die).

Big wheel keep on turnin', Proud Mary keep on burnin' – rollin', rollin', rollin' on the river

Needless to say, a dinner cruise on one of the famous Mississippi paddle steamers, the inspiration behind John Fogerty's classic song *Proud Mary*, was one for the bucket list, while a boat trip on the swamps the following day got us up close (not too close) and personal with the alligators who thankfully gave us safe passage. Unlike the lady in the immigration queue, I've never been a huge Elvis fan, but, having travelled this far, I felt compelled to visit his birthplace in Tupelo, Mississippi before what I considered the highlight of the trip, Memphis and the world famous thoroughfare of Beale Street.

There's a pretty little thing, waitin' for the King, down in the jungle room

We did, of course, go through the perfunctory ritual of visiting the highly commercialised Graceland estate, joining the crowd of smart-phone holding, headphone-wearing tourists as we filed past the Jungle Room (Elvis' man cave) and his ornate gravestone but, having done so, it was on to the centre of Memphis itself.

I'm walkin in Memphis, walking with my feet ten feet off Beale

First stop was Sun Studios, where the careers of both Elvis and Johnny Cash had been launched, then on to Beale Street, starting at the top where we listened to some great music in BB King's Blues Club and eventually ending up at the other end, dining at a restaurant owned by Jerry Lee Lewis, eating good ole southern cuisine while being entertained on the piano by a talented JLL lookalike.

The final leg of the tour took us to Nashville, the smallest of the three music cities but one which is completely ensconced in the genre of country music. The main street, Broadway, is lined on both sides by a series of small bars (honky tonks), with live bands in each one playing 24/7. In between the honky tonks are shops dedicated to selling cowboy boots, Stetsons and other country music paraphernalia.

Down South Jukin' cont'd

A former colleague of mine who was transferred to work in London told me that he felt at times he was walking around on a real life monopoly board. I had a similar feeling when travelling around the southern states. Just about every road sign, every street name seemed to evoke memories of great songs and great artists from my formative years – Basin Street, Highway 49, Bourbon Street, Beale Street – our coach even drove past arguably the most famous road sign of all – Nutbush City Limits.

All of that combined to make it a real fantasy holiday for two nostalgic sixty year olds.

Saw the ghost of Elvis, on Union Avenue

I don't know if the lady from the immigration queue did manage to see the ghost of Elvis – something tells me that she probably did, whether it was on Union Avenue or merely within the confines of her own particular fantasy.



Groups

During the last year, many groups have discovered new ways of operating. For some members, meeting online means not having to travel or find suitable premises and it suits those who find getting out and about difficult but of course it doesn't suit all activities. "Lockdown" attracted new members to outdoor groups such as tennis & golf.

Skill swap?

As society began to open up and groups were able to meet "in person", one of our tennis groups thought to try out a new skill and organised a session of golf. How about extending this shared learning experience to other Groups? Badminton & Belly dancing perhaps?

Our roving reporters

We have over 200 activity groups in Edinburgh u3a but many seem reticent when it comes to putting pen to paper and sharing their adventures with the rest of us. We have two new "Roving reporters" on the Clarion team who are hoping to visit you during the coming months and write a short piece about your group's activities for our next edition.

Playwriting course:

Ten Weeks, Ten Writers, Ten New Plays

Ten u3a members from many parts of Scotland took part recently in a ten-week playwriting course run by Edinburgh u3a chair Richard Peoples, supported by Laure Paterson of Edinburgh-based Citadel Arts. The result was early drafts of ten new plays, scenes from which were performed on Zoom by a group of five professional actors, funded by Citadel.

The course was part of the current u3a: *Online Across Scotland* initiative, which has so far developed 23 groups and courses that are open to all u3a members in Scotland. It is hoped that a similar course will be offered later this year.

In the first eight weeks of the course the participants, many of whom had never written a play before, learned about the elements of playwriting, including plot, character, dialogue,

setting and theme. They took part in a series of creative exercises and activities on Zoom, with time provided for them to write and discuss their scripts with each other and the course leaders.

The final two weeks were reserved for the performances by five Edinburgh-based actors: Adam Tomkins, Andrea McKenzie, Deborah Whyte, Scott Fitzpatrick and Stephanie Falls, all of whom also provided useful feedback for the mostly novice writers.

Following the course, the playwrights plan to meet regularly to discuss their writing progress and share tips and general support. Richard Peoples commented: *"Our writers responded brilliantly to the challenge of creating original drama. They produced scripts on a great variety of subjects, some comic, some serious. We hope they will all continue to write and put their work forward for live performance now that theatres are open again."*

Richard Peoples

Follies – Curious about the Curious?

What is a Folly, and why would anyone take any interest in them?

The Oxford English Dictionary has two definitions for a Folly. The first is *"an ill-conceived, extravagant building or residence."* The second is *"an ornamental structure or building, such as a tower, temple, or artificial ruin, that is primarily decorative rather than functional."* Indeed, one Folly, which is clearly visible from the M9 on the way to Linlithgow, the Binns Tower standing on Binns Hill in West Lothian, was built for a bet in 1862 to see who could waste £100 in the most conspicuous manner. (There appears to be no record to say if it was the winning entry or not.) In essence then, a Folly is something built for no better reason than "Why not" and if someone has seen fit to build such a thing, then it behoves the curious amongst us to go to visit it and appreciate the largesse of the builder.

That is the aim of the U3A Follies group; to go look at some obscure and interesting items of architecture and history – and, of course, a day out in the country and a walk around the hills too.

The group started in 2020, and was promptly hit by the Pandemic. It was relaunched in 2021 and we have a short programme of 4 visits on the second Tuesday of the summer months. We'll keep it to within an hour's drive from Edinburgh and we will expect to visit Follies from the large and spectacular to those which are basically a pile of rocks which one day had been a mock Greek temple.

On 13th July your editor joined Pete Sykes and 2 other Eu3a members on an outing to the *William Wallace Statue* and the *Temple of the Muses* at St Boswells followed by a visit to the *Monteath Mausoleum* near Ancrum. Such visits inevitably result in more questions than answers – who, when and above all WHY?

We walked over the Dryburgh suspension bridge over the Tweed and up a wooded path to the William Wallace statue (not to be confused with the Wallace Monument in Stirling). This stands 9.4 metres (31 feet) tall and looks out towards the Eildon Hills. It is built of red sandstone but was

originally painted white and was erected in 1814 by the 11th Earl of Buchan.

So why Wallace and why here? The Earl, David Erskine, as well as being an antiquarian, had a reputation as something of an eccentric, and spent much of his later life at Dryburgh, embellishing the estate with several monuments. Apparently the Earl had wanted a statue of Burns but changed his mind when he saw the sandstone. Below it is a "funeral style" urn on a pillar of sandstone. (photo)



On the way, we passed the "Orchard gate" also erected by the Earl as an entrance to his vast orchard, part of an agricultural improvement programme. Alas, none of the original trees have survived.



The worn inscription above the gate reads .
*Hoc pomarium sua manu
satum parentibus suis
optimis sac D S Buchanae
comes* ('D. S. Erskine, Earl
of Buchan, dedicated this
orchard, planted with his
own hands, to the best of
parents'.)

Close to the river bank stands the neo classical Temple of the Muses, a tribute to poet James Thomson, who wrote "Rule Britannia". It is no small irony that Wallace has to gaze at him every day!

Follies Group Cont'd

The original statue of Apollo disappeared and its whereabouts are unknown. It was replaced in 2002 by a bronze sculpture of the Four Seasons by Siobhan O'Hehir. We admired the simple elegant treatment – four figures – five legs.



We were met by Nicky Toneri of the Friends of the Monteath Mausoleum, our knowledgeable and enthusiastic guide for the afternoon.

The chamber contains a massive stone box guarded by two angels and lit by 48 glazed stars in the roof. It once contained the coffin but no one knows the whereabouts of Monteath Douglas' remains.



In August we visited the Tyndall Bruce monument near Falkland. This is an ugly looking tower but it does have some beautiful views. We visited this in 2020, but visibility was measured in yards on the day, this year we had better luck and a gorgeous clear sunny day

After lunch we visited the Monteath Mausoleum standing on a glorious hilltop overlooking the site of the battle of Ancrum Moor.

Why is it here?

Thomas Monteath was an army officer in India and inherited the family fortune on his return to Britain. One of his daughters subsequently married the Laird of Ancrum so what better place for a rich and vainglorious ex military man to build himself a mausoleum?

In 2020 we also visited the Wellington Tower near Ancrum, a spectacular 150 ft high tower on Peneil Heugh. This year, Covid restrictions permitting, we hope we will be able to borrow the key and go up it as well. Finally in October we'll keep it local and have a look at that £100 bet in the Binns Tower.

The group has vacancies. Contact Pete Sykes (pete.sykes@outlook.com) to join in.

Photography Group 1: the subject was Water's Edge



Retreat from Cramond Island: Ruth, May 2021

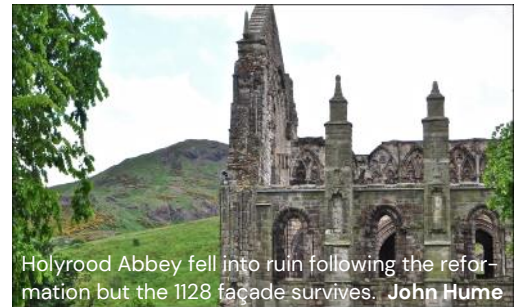
Photography Group 3.

A Day Out along a deserted Royal Mile: Witch Burning, Ice Cream and the Reformation –

With a diverse canvas of subjects ranging from 15th century witch burnings to modern day ice cream parlours, Edinburgh's Royal Mile provides an eclectic mix of photo opportunities for camera enthusiasts, as evidenced by the recent trek along the well travelled route from the palace to the castle which was undertaken by members of the Edinburgh u3a Photography Group 3. Their mission – to create a followup to their highly successful calendar for 2020.



Holyrood and the Royal Mile, the processional route for Kings and Queens from abbey to castle. **Stewart Roberts**



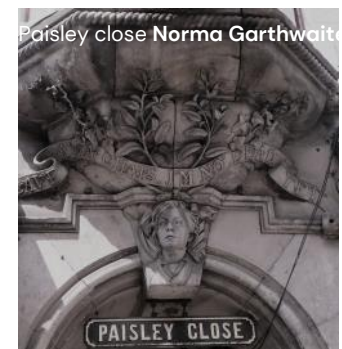
Holyrood Abbey fell into ruin following the reformation but the 1128 facade survives. **John Hume**



"Chessels Court" **Pat Williams**

The weather on the day was not particularly kind but added an extra challenge for the climb which lay ahead. Starting off at the foot of the Mile, the group carried on regardless, examining the historic sites which lay at the foot of the thoroughfare such as Holyrood Abbey and the Scottish Parliament until reaching the sanctuary of Canongate Kirk where we met up for a well-earned coffee break on the external benches.

Further along, Chessels Court is a tranquil haven today but tradition suggests that wicked acts against former residents, including the Secretary for Excise in Scotland, provided the inspiration for Robert Louis Stevenson's novel, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Passing the house of John Knox, founder of the Scottish Presbyterian Church, a plethora of interesting stories emerge along the route, among them the tale of Joseph McIver, one of the survivors of the 1861 Paisley Close tenement collapse who, while being pulled to safety from the rubble, shouted to his rescuers 'heave awa, chaps, ah'm no deid yet.'



Paisley close **Norma Garthwaite**

We made our way along what must surely be the most historic street in Scotland, capturing images of economist and philosopher Adam Smith, whose statue poignantly faces east towards his home town of Kirkcaldy; philosopher and essayist David Hume immortalised in stone alongside the Mile's architectural flagship, St Giles Cathedral and the lead sculpture of Charles II, the last ever king to be crowned on Scottish soil.



"Adam Smith surveys the High Street" **Tim Jones**



Statue of David Hume, the visionary philosopher born on the Royal Mile. **Chris Shelbourne**

Photography Group 3 cont'd

Passing the Tolbooth and its famous clock marking the boundary between former burghs of the Canongait and Edinburgh, we continued towards the Lawnmarket (originally the *Land Market* used primarily by the cloth trade but renamed through persistent mis-pronunciation) and Castlehill, site of processions and medieval witch burnings which are immortalised by the *Witchery by the Castle* Restaurant occupying a substantial 16-century building in the shadow of the castle.



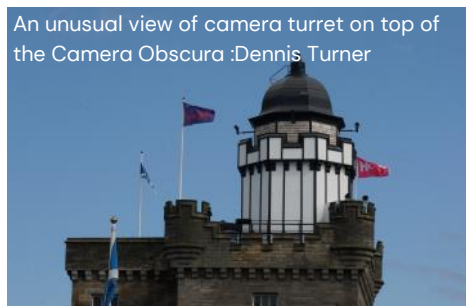
Enjoy lunch on the site where witches were once burnt to death. The Witchery"
Eric Watt

If sustenance is required at this final stage of the expedition, the famous Luca family operates an ice cream parlour near the finishing line.



Luca's Ice Cream parlour -
A welcome refreshment
Fran Goodman

The end of the climb is rewarded by one of the best views in Edinburgh from the Camera Obscura. One regret is that the project only allowed us to capture a tiny part of the rich history of this famous route and its stories.



An unusual view of camera turret on top of the Camera Obscura :Dennis Turner



Tolbooth clock John Hume



Lawn market without tourists Fran Goodman

Photography has always been popular within u3a and the Photography 3 group was created in 2016 from members who were on the waiting lists for the other groups. Luckily Eric Watt stepped up to lead us. Group leadership has recently been taken over by Stewart Roberts who has carried on with the successful formula that has seen the group prosper. New members are warmly welcomed.

The operating model is based on a password protected Flickr site to assist in portfolio sharing and enabling the viewing of high definition images on TV in members' own homes. Meetings take place monthly, in a member's home or alternately in a café where the surrounding area offers plenty of photographic opportunities on the theme of the day. We teach and learn from each other or more rarely from a guest speaker.

As a relative newcomer to the group, I can testify to the fact that our Edinburgh photography group fulfils the aims of u3a: *"... to come together to learn for fun. Members explore new ideas, skills and activities together. We teach and learn from each other but there are no qualifications to pass – it is just for pleasure. Learning is its own reward."* Besides this, we support each other when needed, not forgetting that the social side of u3a is as important as learning. Our photography group more than meets that challenge.

Pat Williams on behalf of Photography Group 3

How the Geology Group managed local trips during lockdown.



Romy and Carolyn with Coco on the Eyemouth coast

The **Geology Group** have been meeting monthly for talks on Zoom, attended by 60 of our 80 members. However, this could never replace the sun, rain and wind of real field trips but Fran Humphrey, our trips organiser, was undaunted. In late summer 2020 she chose four local walks which have detailed leaflets produced by Edinburgh Geological Society and printed with help by funding from our group. Usually we would be led by Angus Miller of Geowalks who has supported our group since its inception but due to Covid restrictions, this wasn't going to be possible.

We decided we could do it ourselves in small groups of 4 to 6 to meet the Covid criteria, with volunteer members recceing and leading each trip with a buddy.

We went to Holyrood Park, a classic extinct volcano, Corstorphine Hill and Blackford Hill both with evidence of glaciation and volcanic activity. Another group also explored Dalkeith Building Stones which offered an opportunity for members who would find rough terrain difficult. All in all, 7 small groups identified a date to get together and explored for themselves.

They were then asked to give illustrated feedback on what they had seen and learnt on Zoom meetings for the whole group. Everyone who managed to go on a trip agreed that they learned much more by having to look carefully for themselves rather than relying on an expert to tell them what they were seeing. Everyone had to contribute to understanding the Geology on the day by reading the leaflet in advance and thinking about what they were seeing. Fran's group chose to visit Castle Rock, both the rock itself and the building stones in the area nearby. They also visited Cramond Island and the foreshore. Others visited the Fife Coast using a leaflet produced by Geoheritage Fife.

While organising the groups had some challenges, we congratulated ourselves on this shared learning model which we felt was exactly what u3a should be about.

Once we were able to go further afield, Fran found leaflets on the geology of Eyemouth produced by Alison Tymon who runs a u3a Geology Group in Berwickshire. Three groups had great days out and learned a huge amount.

Alison Bramley



"Greywacke" on the Eyemouth coast

2020 Garden Tour 30th July–2nd August 2021

Ann Taylor

At last, a smaller than usual group of select enthusiasts set off on the **2020 Garden Tour**, only 14 months late. All the elements of a garden tour were there – cake, herbaceous borders, knowledgeable owners, Billy's exciting reversing skills, and excellent company, oh and cake. Again! Mustn't forget that! We set off from St Andrew Square bus station and headed off to the south-west corner of Scotland.



At Fernlea, Newton Stewart: Ella Bruce

2021 Garden Tour continued

Our first stop was Old Farm Cottage at Nemphar near Lanark, a wildlife garden with interesting shrubs, small trees and herbaceous plantings. Recently, attention has been paid to redesigning borders and developing small alpine beds.

After lunch we visited Glenwhan Garden at Dunragit. At 300ft and overlooking Luce Bay, the Mull of Galloway and views of the Isle of Man, it was developed from wild moorland and has been described as one of the most beautiful gardens in Scotland, with winding paths, well placed seats and varied sculptures around small lakes. We travelled on to our hotel, the Northwest Castle in Stranraer. The hotel was excellent in every way, with lovely rooms and a full menu for us to choose from at breakfast, and in the evening.



Craichlaw, Newton Stewart:
Ella Bruce

On Saturday we visited Craichlaw near Newton Stewart. This is a formal garden with herbaceous borders around the house, and extensive grounds containing lawns, lochs and woodland. Mary, one of the owners, stands no nonsense with a plant – if it doesn't perform, it's out! She is also a

skilled potter, and several of us bought ceramics to take home.

After lunch, we visited Fernlea. This garden, a third of an acre in size, was created in 2006. It is densely planted, and rather overgrown, but has a certain charm. It is listed on Google as a B&B – '*fluent Norwegian spoken*' for any Norwegian u3a members out there.

The final garden of the day was Liggat Cheek Cottage. Here we found friendly and knowledgeable hosts. The garden has a small woodland and shade area, whilst the rest of the garden is divided into informal rooms with herbaceous perennials, shrubs, conifers and grasses. We also sampled some of the best home-made meringues I have tasted for some time! On Sunday we journeyed south to the Mull of

Galloway. The first stop was Damnaglaure House at Drummore. The garden is just under half an acre with shrubs to protect it from the wind. It contains many special herbaceous plants and trees, a pond with fish and waterfall.



Next was Logan Botanic Gardens, one of the regional gardens of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh. With the influence of the Gulf Stream, it is unrivalled as the country's most exotic garden. The walled garden has magnificent tree ferns, palms and borders, and the conservatory houses a special collection of South African plants.

On our final day, we travelled to Kirkcudbright. Here we visited the garden of Broughton House. The house was the home of the artist E. A. Hornell. It is not presently open, so we had time to visit the town where we were delighted to find the final day of an Arts Festival, with stalls on the green, and several private town gardens open too.

After lunch we travelled to Burnside near Drongan, an astonishing 6½ acre garden with herbaceous beds, an ericaceous garden, three alpine glass houses, a pond and an arboretum. In the house, all surfaces of the kitchen were covered with streptocarpus plants, just because the owner likes them.



Display of Streptocarpus.
Jean McCallum

Thanks go to everyone involved in planning the tour, the Northwest Castle hotel for their hospitality, and Glenton Holidays for providing the transport.

Anne Taylor

Current Committee

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Vice Chair: **Ann Keating**

Secretary: **Vacant**

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Keith Guy

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Alan Huyton

Group Coordinator 4 (Groups Q-S):
Susan Miles

Group Coordinator 5 (Groups T-Z):
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Diversity and inclusion: **Frank Ledwith**

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Volunteers: **Tricia Allan**

Assistant Webmaster: **Jean Knox**

Visits: **Ann Kerrigan**

Contact details can be found in the **Contact** (password protected) area of the website and on your membership card

Editor's note

A big thank you to all those who contributed to this edition. 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.

The **Spring 2022 edition** is due out in early March. Further information on themes and guidance will be available in the Bulletin and on the Website. Contributions 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 Word or Word compatible document (Click on "save as" and select appropriate format) or just send in an email. Don't worry about fonts or text formatting, but if

you include photographs, these should preferably be sent as a separate image file (JPEG or TIFF) rather than embedded in articles or emails as these might be compressed so much their resolution is too low for publication. If you don't have access to a word processing device (computer, tablet etc) 'phone Maggie on 07808 319485.

The Clarion team of **Norma Emm** and myself are joined by **Alan Fairley** who worked as a journalist and sub editor for *Scotland on Sunday* and **Colin Stephenson**, whose interests are painting, photography and graphic design. Thanks too to **Joanna Morris** for her always thorough proof reading. Except where otherwise credited, all photos are taken by the author(s) of the article.

Paper version. If you want a paper version of this magazine, please contact the membership Secretary, Ann Ryan membership@edinburghu3a.org.uk

Clarion is produced by Edinburgh u3a, Scottish Charity Number SC020301 and printed by Dupliquick, 22a Great King Street, Edinburgh EH36QH