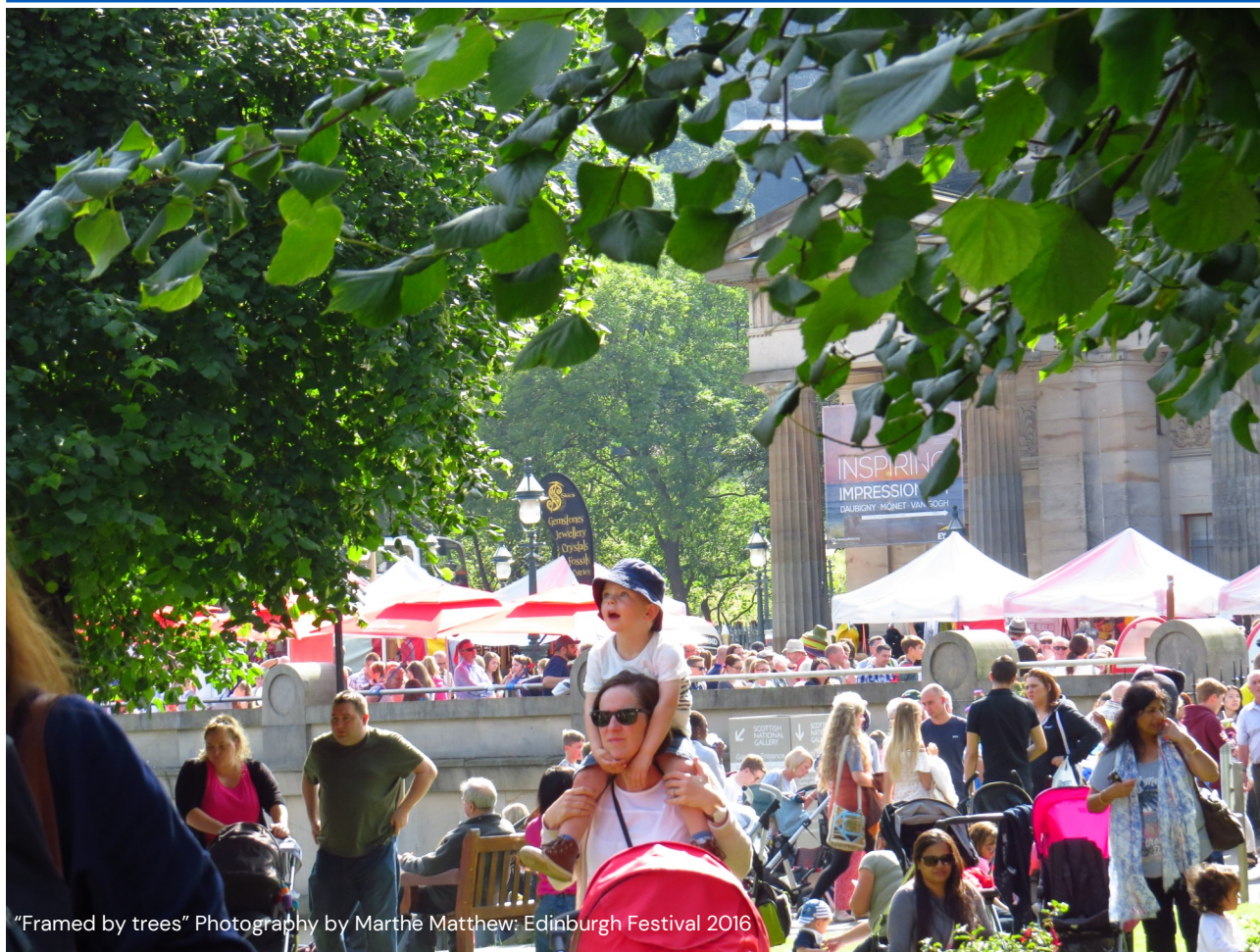




Clarion is the magazine of Edinburgh u3a and is published bi-annually with contributions from and about individual members and groups. The **Bulletin** is published monthly on-line and contains brief updates on forthcoming events and group news.



"Framed by trees" Photography by Marthe Matthew: Edinburgh Festival 2016

In this Issue:

Letter from your Chair

New Members

u3a in Scotland Summer School

There are no Strangers Here

A last visit: a day to remember

Monthly meetings

Uncle Bruce

Special celebrations:

Big Birthdays

The Party

The 1947 Edinburgh Festival

Groups.

Eu3a Singers

Gallery 4 group visit to Traquair

Laughter Yoga

Book groups share suggestions

Astronomy Group

Film appreciation 5

Current Committee

Editor's Note

Letter from your Chair

Richard Peoples

Chair, Edinburgh u3a



Your u3a still needs you!

Membership of Edinburgh u3a is gradually returning to the numbers we had before the pandemic and we remain by far the largest u3a in Scotland. However, awareness of who we are and what we do is not great, even in Edinburgh, and many of us feel that it's time for us to raise our profile and recruit new members as the city continues to grow.

In particular, we need to reach out to communities where u3a is under-represented, and to make ourselves known to more people who are approaching retirement from full-time work. We also need to recruit more group leaders and to create new groups so that new and existing members can have as wide a choice of u3a activities as possible.

With these aims in mind, we've put together a marketing and recruitment plan which we will present at our AGM in October. We will need volunteers to help us implement the plan, so if you have a background in marketing or PR, have knowledge of digital media or simply want to help, please let us know.

One of our committee members recently made the point that u3a is not a 'service' in which paid staff provide activities for members. We are all volunteers and our principle is mutual self help, so we ask all members to make an active contribution if they possibly can, as they take advantage of the learning and social opportunities that u3a provides. To adapt President Kennedy's famous statement: **Ask not what your u3a can do for you; ask what you can do for your u3a.**

So, if you're willing to help make more people aware of Edinburgh u3a and/or help us to improve what we have to offer our members, please contact me at chair@edinburghu3a.org.uk.

Doreen Barr

We're very sorry to report that one of our most valued committee members, Doreen Barr, has passed away after contracting leukaemia. As well as leading our team of groups coordinators, Doreen took on the job of organising our online Christmas concerts during the pandemic, and also helped to set up and run the *u3a: Online Across Scotland* initiative, which now provides more than 20 online groups for people across Scotland. She was also group leader of the Pool group and an active member of the astronomy group. Doreen was friendly, hard-working and always willing to help her fellow members in any way she could. She will be sorely missed.

New committee members

We're pleased to announce that we now have two new groups coordinators to make up our full complement of five. They are **Anne Cardew**, who takes over as GC1, looking after groups beginning with letters A to C, and **George Birrell**, our new GC3, who looks after groups from J to P. George is also helping with our marketing and recruitment initiatives.

Other new members of our committee are **Ann Williams**, who has taken over from Patrick Leach as External Communications Coordinator, and **Graham Golden**, our new Internal Communications Coordinator, who replaces Bruce Cowan. We thank Patrick and Bruce for all their work on our behalf. As well as serving two three-year terms as our Chair, Bruce took on the role again temporarily before I took over in October 2020, and has helped in so many ways to keep Edinburgh u3a going, especially during the pandemic.

Stepping down

Finally, I very much regret to announce that I have to step down as Chair of Edinburgh u3a after nearly two years because I have recently suffered severe hearing loss. I can now only hear conversations at close quarters, and hardly at all when there is background noise. I'm looking into what help I can get to improve my hearing, but this could take some time. In the meantime I'm unable to take an active part in meetings, whether in person or online. I've very much enjoyed being your Chair and hope I will be able to return to the committee if and when my hearing improves.

RP

New Members

During lockdown over 300 new members joined Edinburgh u3a and were unable to attend a New Members Meeting due to the restrictions on face to face meetings. Earlier this year we were able to restart these and organised three meetings in April and May to give everyone who joined during lockdown an opportunity to attend a meeting. It was good to see so many new, enthusiastic faces and meet new interesting people.

Meetings took place in the Edinburgh Quaker Meeting hall with tea, coffee and biscuits provided. The meetings were all very friendly and informal, new members had an opportunity to meet new people, to chat with each other and the committee members, to share information about interests and to talk about experiences of groups they have joined and enjoyed. Once everyone arrived and had a chance for refreshment, our Chairman Richard Peoples opened the meeting and introduced the committee members.

It was particularly helpful to have group coordinators explain a bit about how to find a group, join a group and start a new group. There is no special skill or ability needed to start a group, just an interest in a topic and a desire to share your interest with other people. We were delighted when one of the new members volunteered to join the committee as a group coordinator.

Edinburgh u3a is such a large organisation that there are always roles available on the committee. We are all volunteers so please don't be shy about coming forward to offer your help.

Dierdre Duffy

u3a in Scotland Summer School

Postponed for two years because of the pandemic, the u3a in Scotland Summer School took place at Stirling Court Hotel on the beautiful campus of the University of Stirling from 18th to 22nd August.

There were 67 participants from u3as all over Scotland including about 6 from Edinburgh and a few from England. All the courses were well received and the feedback for the summer school was very positive and enthusiastic.

For a fuller account read Susan Tester's report in <https://u3asites.org.uk/scotland/page/72957>

Participants were able to choose one topic to study for two half-days and one full day from the following list:

- Ancient Civilisations of Mesoamerica: Olmec, Maya and Aztecs by Prof. Maria Chester, of East Berwickshire u3a.
- Creative Writing: on Writing Short Stories by Gilly Beckett of East Berwickshire u3a.
- Exploring Poetry by Peter Holmes of Forth Valley u3a.
- Immunology – Our Immune System: Friend or Foe? by Prof. David I Stott of Bearsden and Milngavie u3a.
- A Great Leap Forward? Scottish History 1750 – 1850 by Bill Bedborough, Dr Sheena Bedborough and Robert Hough of Forth Valley u3a.

The organisers also ran a quiz, evening entertainment and visits to local attractions.

Richard Peoples

There are no Strangers Here.

Edinburgh's main contribution to u3a's 40th anniversary is a play that celebrates positive futures for older people. Entitled '(There Are) No Strangers Here', the play had a sell-out premiere at the Netherbow Theatre, part of the Scottish Storytelling Centre, on 9 September.

Set in the near future, when catastrophic climate change has forced millions to leave their homes, the play shows how older people can make a real contribution in times of crisis. Produced by Richard Peoples, the play's four writers were Edinburgh members Hilary Spiers and Richard Peoples, together with Susan Chaney and Laure Paterson, who also wrote and played the music.

A video version of the play has been filmed and will soon be available to all u3a members.



Photo from rehearsals. Top: Agnes and Maryam.
Lower Danny and Ziad

Richard Peoples

A Last Visit: a day to remember.



Several Eu3a members witnessed the historic events in Edinburgh on 12th and 13th Sept.

Was it serendipitous, or was it carefully planned that our late queen would die at Balmoral? We may never know. Whichever, we Scots had the first claim on the well organised ceremonial and I think we did pretty well. Both for her travel from Balmoral to the Palace of Holyrood House and later from there to Edinburgh airport, the streets of the villages, towns and cities were lined with people wishing to pay their respects. The sun shone down on Holyrood Palace, St Giles and the Royal Mile. When I tried to get into St Giles I was told the queue time could be between 8 and 11 hours – too daunting for me. Apparently it was down to 1-2 hours if you joined between 3 and 4 in the morning !

Friends from abroad have commented how moving the proceedings in Edinburgh were.

Richard de Soldenhoff

On Tuesday we joined thousands filing through St Giles to pay their respects to the Queen. We would have struggled to queue for four or five hours, but having mobility issues, we were fast tracked. Meticulous planning meant large numbers of police (many clearly drafted in from distant parts of Scotland and elsewhere in the UK) were joined by volunteers, all in yellow hi-vis, welcoming those joining the long queue. We passed through security, received our green wrist bands and were directed to the waiting taxis taking us to St Giles. We spoke to people from Edinburgh and further afield; USA, Germany, India who often had difficult journeys but wanted to pay their respects to the Queen for whom they expressed great affection. Inside St Giles, the atmosphere was hushed. A moving and memorable experience.

Anon

Monthly Meetings

Monthly Meetings (for members only) commence on 21st September and thereafter the third Wednesday of most months from 2.30 to 4.00 pm at the Main Hall in the Epworth Halls of the Methodist Church, 25 Nicolson Square, Edinburgh EH8 9BX. The Square is almost opposite Surgeons Hall, and is served by many buses. Details of talks and speakers are listed below and on the Website. There is no charge for attendance, and the church will supply refreshments.

Oct 19th Ian Archibald: *Above and Below the Waves of Scotland's West Coast:*

Ian will discuss the rich diversity of Scotland's west coast marine assets. He illustrates how much of this is managed by the Crown Estate Scotland and other authorities and relates his personal involvement with the west coast from surveying antiquities and marine activities to diving historic wrecks and climbing mountains. Ian Archibald was formerly with the Crown Estates Office. He is now convenor of Burntisland Heritage Trust and has talked to us before about Mary Somerville.

Nov 16th Nick Benge : *Friends of Cammo.*

Nick is the chair of Friends of Cammo and founder of Water Gems. He has a degree specialising in Ecology and a Masters in Aquaculture. He knows everything you ever needed to know about ponds and has documented the wetlands, wildlife meadows, hedgerows and wildlife of Cammo.

Dec 14th. Christmas Party

Jan 18th Ed Heather-Hayes: *Fife Coast and Countryside Project.*

Ed is head of development for the Fife Coast and Countryside Trust, an independent local charity dedicated to giving everyone an opportunity to enjoy Fife's great outdoors. It looks after over 30 sites and path networks including the Fife Coastal Path and the visitors centre at the Harbourmaster's House in Dysart.

Feb 15th Charlie Guy: *Dead and Buried.*

Charlie will look at 19th century funeral traditions/superstitions. From booby-trapped coffins and body-snatchers to post-mortem photography and funeral souvenirs, the long-19th-century's obsession with death was all-encompassing; spawning an era of now-forgotten death-etiquette, creepy funerary practices,

traditions, and superstitions designed to keep the departed firmly within their realm. But the battle to appease the dead often caused war among the living. Charlie describes herself as Anatomist, tutor, historian, author, ghost tour guide.

March 15th Michael Keating: *Europe, Scotland and the UK.*

Michael recently retired as Director of the ESRC Centre on Constitutional Change and is an expert on constitutional affairs. He is the author or editor of over thirty books on Scottish politics, European politics, nationalism and regionalism. He is also a member of Edinburgh u3a.

April 19th Brian Taylor: *Stands Scotland Where it Did?*

Brian Taylor needs little introduction. He is a former political editor for BBC Scotland, co-presenting the politics programme "*Right, Left and Centre*" with Kirsty Wark and presenting "*Good Morning Scotland*" After retiring from the BBC he became a columnist for The Herald.

May 17th Duncan Robertson: *Paolozzi in Munich*

Duncan is an artist, sculptor and gallery educator, based at the Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop. He studied sculpture in Munich with Eduardo Paolozzi and will be discussing Paolozzi's work as well as his own career as a sculptor.

June 21st David Clarke: *Scots in Africa*

David Clarke is a secondary level History teacher in Edinburgh with a passion for connecting the heritage of the city to the wider world. His areas of interest include investigating the personal stories and links between Edinburgh and Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries. He has spoken over the years for the City of Edinburgh Council's Lauriston lecture series, for National Museums of Scotland, Historic Environment Scotland, Edinburgh World Heritage and the University of Glasgow.

Uncle Bruce:

Quite an Expensive Present!

Patricia Baillie Strong



My husband Stuart is fascinated by genealogy and has managed to trace his ancestors all the way back to 1680. This was made easier for him because his ancestors come from Shetland where genealogy is well documented.

In 1992, we were living in Belgium and went to Shetland on holiday to discover more about Stuart's ancestry. We stayed in a cosy B & B establishment and spent most of our leisure time in the Lerwick Library. The archivist was extremely helpful and allowed us (husband, elderly father-in-law, two sons and myself) to pore over the archives. Many years later, when Stuart returned to Lerwick, the archivist told him that he remembered our visit well, particularly since it had included Stuart's father-in-law.

While we were there, one of Stuart's elderly and long-distant relatives, Frank Garriock, invited us to afternoon tea at his home in Lerwick. During the course of conversation, he enquired whether we would be interested in acquiring a portrait of one of Stuart's ancestors, his great-grand-uncle Bruce. *"Certainly,"* says Stuart. *"Well, it did fall off the wall on one occasion and has a bit of a gash but otherwise it's all right,"* Frank admitted. We arranged then and there to have it taken to a picture restorer in Lerwick, who examined the picture and told us that it would need considerable repair because of the damage. Unfortunately, the restorer would not have time to do this for us before we left to go back to Belgium a few days later.

So, how to get the picture, which measured 1.5 metres x 1 metre to Belgium? Shipping it commercially would be difficult and expensive.

How about placing it on the roof rack of our car? But, we had no roof rack and there were none available in Shetland. We had the brainwave to order a roof rack in Aberdeen to be collected when we arrived on the overnight ferry.

Before leaving Shetland, Stuart arranged to rent a van to take the picture from the restorer to the ferry. He and eldest son Alastair got there in the nick of time, carried the heavy picture onboard with some difficulty and placed it outside our cabin. Next morning, on arrival in Aberdeen, Stuart and Alastair carried the picture off the ferry, drove to the Audi garage and bought a roof rack. With copious amounts of string and brown paper, the picture was secured and we set off on the next stage of the journey home to Belgium.

In the meantime, we had been invited to lunch with an elderly aunt in Aberdeenshire and also needed to stop in Edinburgh where the picture was taken off the car to prevent theft overnight. Driving was slow and precarious with the precious cargo and its brown paper flapping above us.

At Hull, we took another ferry across the North Sea to Zeebrugge in Belgium where we disembarked and journeyed on to our final destination in the Flemish countryside. We all breathed a sigh of relief at its safe arrival there.

However, it still needed to be repaired. Fortunately, a friend recommended a restorer living fairly locally and, a couple of months later, we were finally able to hang it in our sitting room to be admired by all our friends.

We are very fond of the picture of Uncle Bruce who, at the time he was painted, was only seven years old. He has a somewhat wistful expression and is dressed in old-fashioned clothes holding an outsized hat, clutching a toy yacht. Sadly, he died shortly after the portrait was painted, drowning at sea.

We returned to Edinburgh from Belgium a few years ago and have placed Uncle Bruce between two large windows, where he fits perfectly. Our heirloom is certainly well-travelled!

PBS

Special celebrations

Big Birthdays

In my late forties I decided to make a career change without delay. It seemed important to have a number beginning with a four in the age slot of my CV, as fifty looked so old, a milestone well along on the road to senility.

Fast forward to sixty-five, and I became a pensioner – that really did put me in the “old” category, no matter how I felt about it. Fortunately the wonderful bus pass, free prescriptions and senior citizen entry to events gave me cause for rejoicing rather than moping about “getting on down the road.” I am pleased to say that no-one offered to give up their seat in public transport to me at this stage.

I am not a church-goer, but seventy, or three score years and ten, had an air of finality about it, the reaching of a terminus. In modern times the road of life has been extended, so seventy was passed with a mere nod of achievement. From then on everything was a bonus.

At seventy-five the City of Edinburgh encouraged me to stay fit. A card enabling me to swim in any of their excellent leisure centres became available at a one-off payment of £17 *until the day I die!* As one who enjoys value for money I find this a wonderful incentive to keep going as long as I can.

I have just reached eighty, which sounds distinctly elderly. Indeed I observe a certain fraying at the edges. When I have an injury or an illness the years hang heavy and old age senses a good time to attack. I become more forgetful, clumsy, grumpy and creaky. In this state I carry an aura of decrepitude which takes an effort to shake off. I am aware that most of the general public, if they read a report of a traffic accident with the words: *“the 80-year old male driver of the other car”* will most likely think: *“Silly old git – he should no longer be driving at that stage of life.”* Those of us who are in this age zone actually drive extra-carefully to avoid such opprobrium.

No, eighty is just a number, a milestone if you must, but I agree with the person who said that

birthdays should be celebrated exclusively by the under 10s and the over 90s. When I shake off the illness or injury I still see the road still open ahead of me, and just wonder how far I can travel along it.

David Syme

The Party

Edinburgh – 7 November

Patricia picked up the phone on the first ring and within seconds she had the urge to silence her sister’s strident voice. However, she realised that cutting off the voice would not eradicate her irritation, nor allow her to recapture that blissful Friday night feeling, so treasured by the wage slave. So, she gripped the handset and continued to listen.

When the litany finally ended she spoke, *“No, I don’t think a surprise ceilidh would be a good idea for mam and dad’s 60th wedding anniversary. In fact I don’t think a surprise anything would be appropriate. You know mam, she just loves to talk and dad won’t dance anyway. And – how on earth can we surprise them? Mam will go into a terminal decline if she thinks we’re not arranging something special.”* Margaret immediately snapped back, *“You’re so negative! At least I’m trying to do something, but all you ever think of is that damned job of yours. I’ll speak to the others and let you know what we decided.”* The echoing silence that ensued indicated that no response was required.

Richmond, Yorkshire – 1 December

Michael enjoyed his role as the only son, confident that his mother treasured him just that little bit more than his 4 sisters. The fact that he wasn’t the oldest had never stopped him assuming a patriarchal role, much to the irritation of his sisters, especially Kathleen, the biological eldest. Margaret had regaled him with her indignant account of her conversation with Patricia. *“God”,* he thought, *“Those 2 were so volatile, best friends one minute and at each other’s throats the next”.* However, in this instance, despite Margaret’s subjective account, he could see both sides.

Perhaps a ceilidh wasn't the best idea. He knew exactly how the anniversary should be celebrated and a surprise element would make it just that little bit more special.

Florida, USA – Christmas Day

The late afternoon sun filtered through the palm fronds that overhung the deck. Noreen glanced up and smiled, as her father deposited a tray of coffee and her favourite almond cookies on the low table. *"Daddy, that was a stupendous lunch. Yeah, although I still miss you in Boston, the experience of a Florida Christmas almost compensates for you becoming a snowbird."* *"It's just great to have you, honey."* Eddie replied, *"Now, what happened to Bob and the little fella? I've got something to tell you all."*

"Bob won't be long. He's just settling Gerard in his crib. The little angel is tucked out after his very first Christmas." As Noreen finished speaking Bob opened the sliding door and came to join them. *"Ok", said Eddie. "I've decided to save the best 'til last. I've got one more Christmas present. How do all 3 of you fancy coming with me on a trip to England in February? It's aunt Anne and uncle Paddy's diamond wedding. Anne would just love to see the little fella for the first time."*

It was Bob who spoke first, *"Whoa, Eddie. This is way too generous. Besides the fact that I'd have to take extra vacation, isn't Gerard a little young for a trans-Atlantic flight?"*

Noreen looked from her husband to her father. *"Daddy, I would love to go, but can you give Bob and I a couple of days to think about it?"* Eddie sighed – not quite the response he'd anticipate, but he knew that aunt Anne held a special place for Noreen, especially since her mother's death.

Email from Kathleen to Michael, Patricia, Margaret and Eileen

Date: 26 December – Heading: Problems

Just to let you know that Mam's been on the phone and she's gone into martyr mode because we don't have grand plans for the 60th. If we ever manage to get her there I just want it to be known that I've already written the speech and I'll be delivering it. Michael take note. We don't want a repeat of the debacle at their 50th anniversary. Hope you all had the happiest of happy Christmases. Love Kath.

Email from Eileen to Kathleen, Michael, Patricia and Margaret

Date: 29 December – Heading: Re Problems

Hi Everyone

Sorry I can't contribute much to the organisation. Living out in the sticks with 3 ankle biters doesn't give me much scope. However, I'm happy to spin mam and dad a tale about a small family dinner to celebrate the fact that they've successfully battled through 60 years of togetherness. Happy for Kath to do the speech. Would you like me to put my song writing talent to good use again?

All the best for the New Year. Eileen xxx

Mitchelstown, Co Cork , Ireland – 2 January

Alice picked up the letter from the door mat. An English postmark – must be from Paddy. Her husband Sean's brother was the only family left in England. But it certainly wasn't Paddy's handwriting. He had a lovely hand still, even though he was in his 80s.

She opened the envelope and smiled. Now, wasn't that grand. Paddy's daughter, Margaret, wanted them both and Cathy to come to a do for Paddy and Anne's 60th. Hadn't Paddy been blest with a fine family? But, unfortunately, she couldn't go. Her own fine family, right here in Cork, would be lost without her help with the grandchildren, even for 2 or 3 days. Still, her sister-in-law, Cathy would be raring to go. At 75, she still loved a party and she'd had plenty of experience of dealing with Sean's little problem. He'd be in safe hands with Cathy.

Email from Eileen to Kathleen, Michael, Patricia and Margaret

Date: 5 January – Heading: Saint Annie?

Hi guys and gals, Kath was right. She's gone past martyr mode and is now heading towards canonisation. She insists she doesn't want a quiet meal, or anything else arranged at such short notice. She's saying very little, but I can read the signs and she's definitely seething quietly. If we don't do something soon to appease her, I anticipate that the quiet phase is going to be followed by an eruption. Ideas anyone? Love Eileen

Margaret's house – 20 January

"Well, Michael, I think that between us we've got almost everything covered". Margaret flipped open her notebook and with a flourish of her pink, floral Paperchase pen proceeded to tick off the items on her detailed list.

*Function suite at the White Horse – booked
Menu – agreed (numbers hovering around the low 80s) Darlington Mummers and friends – confirmed.*

Richmond folk group – confirmed

Dedication of the Saturday 6 pm vigil mass – confirmed by Father O'Leary

"You'll pick up the Americans from Manchester airport on the Friday. I'll pick up the Irish contingent from Newcastle airport on Saturday morning. Patricia will pick up the London/Irish from the station on Saturday afternoon.

The anniversary song has been written by Eileen and the words emailed. No need to practice as we all know the tune. Don't forget your guitar.

And of course, Kathleen has written the speech".

At the mention of the speech a slight frown shadowed Michael's face and then deepened as Margaret move onto the final item. "The one thing we haven't sorted is how the hell we ensure we get them there without using brute force. She's still adamant she wants no part of any celebration."

Email from Patricia to Kathleen, Michael, Margaret and Eileen: – 30 January.

Paddy and Anne Will Go to the Ball

Here's my plan. I suggest a pincer movement involving Dad and Fr O'Leary. Dad's happy to go out for a meal, so we've got him on side. Prior to the day we can let mam and dad know that the 6 pm vigil mass is being dedicated to them and we'll all be attending. She won't back out of that for fear of losing face in front of Fr O'Leary and their church cronies.

Fr O'Leary is in on the secret, so we'll get him to collar them after mass to congratulate them and say that he hopes they enjoy the meal with their wonderful family. While he delays them, you and half the congregation leg it up to the White Horse. I then get them in the car and make my way there at a leisurely pace.

How's that for a plan? By golly, I think we've got it.

Patricia xxx

The White Horse Hotel – 7 February

Paddy stepped forward and as the faces of friends, neighbours and family turned towards him, a huge grin split his face. Anne stood stock still and stared in amazement at the grinning throng. When the cry of "Happy anniversary!" filled the room, she promptly burst into tears and backed out. Within 3 seconds she'd returned. The tears vanished as she circled the room laughing, talking, and exclaiming as she encountered American and Irish relatives, neighbours and friends from far and near, some not seen for many a year. The Mummers performed their play to an enthusiastic audience, the folk singers sang, grand children performed, the anniversary song was commended and speeches brought more tears. Even Cathy's failure to contain Sean's little problem could not dim an evening that was, forever afterward referred to by Annie as, "The night of my life."

Trish O'Brien

The 1947 Edinburgh Festival

This year we welcomed the full return of the Edinburgh Festivals.

We also marked 75 years of the Edinburgh International Festival.

Helen Leslie has researched its history.

Illustration from the Radio Times in 1947



The inaugural 20th century **Edinburgh International Festival of Music and Drama** began on 24 August 1947. Its creation was initially the brainchild of Rudolph Bing, an Austrian-born opera impresario and General Manager of Glyndebourne Players, who were based in England. One of the main reasons for the festival was to establish a new venue for the world's most famous artistic performers, and their audiences in Europe. This was necessary due to the destruction of the traditional European venues during WW2. Fortuitously, this project coincided with the aims of the newly formed Arts Council of Great Britain, whose brief was to promote more opportunities for people to enjoy, and benefit from British culture.

In 1946 Bing, together with Henry Harvey Wood, Chairman of the Arts Council, began the search in England for a suitable location. This search proved fruitless, so casting their net wider they decided that Edinburgh was the perfect setting for a new, international festival predicated on its ancient beauty, safe atmosphere, and compact size. Additionally, it was deemed by all to be an opportunity for this august city to attain a new, post-war identity as *'the cultural resort of Europe'*.

When the project's expenditure was discussed in Edinburgh's council chambers, the Lord Provost explained that the net cost would be £35,000, originating from an Arts Council grant of £30,000 (paid in two instalments) with an additional £20,000 gifted from Edinburgh citizens. At that point the modern Edinburgh International Festival of Music and Drama was born.

Accommodation, amongst other things, soon proved to be a problem. Given that austerity measures were still in place two years after the end of WW2, it was not possible for the requisite facilities to be of the highest standard. It was estimated that ten thousand offers of accommodation were needed to facilitate the visitors, and to help achieve this Lady Rosebery exhorted the *"ladies of Edinburgh to temporarily become landladies"*. A Manchester Evening News reporter wrote that a lot of private citizens had offered a spare bed or sofa to help with the chronic shortage. Describing his own accommodation experience he said, *"In my hotel, where booking opened in January, twenty-one guests were waiting patiently for one, harassed waiter to serve them breakfast this morning"*.

Princes Street was given a facelift during the two months leading up to the opening of the festival. Many shopfronts were cleaned and painted, and royal coats of arms were restored to their original condition; floral window boxes further enhanced the display. The Public Parks and Gardens Department added the finishing touches, by adorning tram standards with wire baskets containing geraniums and Japanese honeysuckle. Additionally, a display of chrysanthemums, and many other flowers embellished the outside of the Usher Hall in the West End, while in Princes Street Gardens the floral clock was much admired.

A quote by the late Bruce Cannon, journalist and long-time member of u3a, evokes a vivid picture of Edinburgh during festival time, *"To me the best effort in the early years, was the erection of flagpoles the length of Princes Street, with the flags of the nations, clearly emphasising the world-wide nature of the festival. It looked very impressive until a shop at the West End objected to having the Hammer and Sickle flag of the former Soviet Union outside their premises"*. Another fond memory was, *"I vividly recall the spectacular appearance on the roof of the Bandstand, a group of military trumpeters who played a stirring fanfare"*.

The festival began with a service held in St Giles, attended by the city's dignitaries. Queen Elizabeth and Princess Margaret also attended the service. In total 1600 invited guests filed into the church, then after a fanfare of trumpets was blown by the State trumpeters the Service began. The theme of the sermon preached that day was *'that art was a means of healing the wounds of war'*. Another focus of the Church of Scotland was the formation of an alliance between the arts and religion, with a view to countering what it saw as the unfortunate growth of secularism.

That evening the festivities commenced at the Usher Hall, with a rendition of the British National Anthem and the Marseillaise, played by the L'Orchestre Colonne symbolising the 'Entente Cordiale'. This performance was enthusiastically received by an audience of slightly under 3,000. Over the next three weeks, many distinguished actors, including Laurence Olivier and Alec

Guinness, performed at the festival and Margot Fonteyn danced with Sadler's Wells Ballet Company in a production of Swan Lake. Le Compagnie Juvet du Théâtre de l'Athénée performed Moliere's L'École des Femmes at the Lyceum at the behest of Queen Elizabeth, as it was one Princess Margaret's favourite comedies.

The Scottish element of the overall programme consisted of concerts of Gaelic and Scottish songs, poetry readings by Scottish poets and two late-night Ceilidhs. Criticism however was expressed that more had not been made of Scottish dramatists, for example E.M. Forster said that *"It is surely regrettable that no play by J. M. Barrie or James Bridie is being performed"*. This was a sentiment echoed in The Times newspaper and elsewhere, although in defence of the organising committee, the lack of content was partly due to a disagreement behind the scenes between James Bridie and the producer of his play, which resulted in the production being cancelled.

Bruno Walter conducting the Vienna Philharmonic closed the festival. This prestigious gentleman said *'What you have done in Edinburgh is one of the most magnificent experiences since the war.'*

The success of that 1947 festival was apparent, in the many, overwhelmingly positive reviews printed in national newspapers at that time.

Richard Capell of the Daily Telegraph summed up the festival's success in his review, *"The Edinburgh Festival which ends today, has been a roaring success and its continuity in 1948 assured. Edinburgh has developed a manner of festival making of its own"*.

Helen Leslie

Groups

Eu3a has over 200 groups and here we feature some of their recent activities. For an up-to-date list of groups and contact details, please see the website which is updated monthly.

Eu3a Singers

Summer concert at Reid Memorial Hall

We've been busy with u3a Singers – several new singers have joined since we went back to meeting in-person in March. We started back up again on September 12th.



Our summer "Tea Party" concert on 26th June was a huge success! We had such a large audience we had to put out more chairs. We think we need to make this a feature of our singing year.

Our programme included music by John Rutter, Howard Goodall, Andy Beck, The Muppets and a Ghanaian rock band! Our audience loved the music and several people enquired about joining us for next term. Most importantly, our u3a Singers enjoyed this special occasion.

We're welcoming the piano services of Ailsa Aitkenhead who accompanied us for our summer concert and is coming along once a month from September. It'll make my job a lot easier – I sometimes run out of hands when playing piano, conducting and helping folk to find the right page in their song folders!

We *always* have room for more singers – our rehearsal room could cope with at least 70 of us! If you want to join us, I suggest you get in touch beforehand and ask about the music that we sing – it's an eclectic mix.

Lesley Hartley



Gallery 4 Group visit to Traquair

On 30 June, members of the u3a Gallery Group 4 ventured out on the X62 bus to Innerleithen in Peeblesshire, destination Traquair, a c.900 year old house and grounds, former hunting lodge for the monarchs of Scotland and now home to Catherine Maxwell Stuart, 21st Lady of Traquair, and her family. As such, it is Scotland's oldest inhabited house. The view on approach is quite magnificent: a dramatic white frontage with iron entrance gates bearing sculptures, and a backdrop of hills.

According to history, the Traquair family had upheld their Catholic faith and remained loyal to the Stuarts throughout the Jacobite uprisings, for which they paid dearly with imprisonments, fines and social isolation. The story of the house and its inhabitants was related to us informally by our guide, who showed us the large collections of embroideries and relics in the living rooms and library and patiently answered lots of questions! After, we were free to wander the extensive grounds and woodlands and relax, in glorious sunshine, at the Garden Cafe. There is also a half-acre sized maze (sadly not open that day) and an 18th century working brewery with ales to sample and buy.

A really enjoyable day of interesting exhibits and relaxation in a beautiful Borders setting and I for one look forward to a return visit to tackle the maze! Thank you, Susan, for organising.

Laughter Yoga

Giggles on the Menu

"So nice to be here today, to meet each other in person". Until now, for some, faces seen only on a screen. Laughing. Smiling.

I live way south of the Scottish border, so I'm sorry I won't be at this lunch date. After all, it's not often one sits down to eat in a Glasgow restaurant with an ambassador. Judith Walker, recently appointed Laughter Ambassador, no less, is leader of Edinburgh's u3a laughter yoga classes. Judith was presented with her award by Laughter Yoga International for bringing good health, joy and peace into u3a members' homes via online classes. Well done, Judith. Very well deserved.



Judith receives her award

I wonder what will be on the lunch menu. Bound to be giggles, for, it has to be said, this group is no ordinary group. They meet each week online to laugh with Judith. Joyful ladies who love to laugh – at themselves, at life. If quizzical looks should come their way over lunch, they won't be fazed. They're accustomed to quizzical looks ... from a household companion, a visiting relative, their dog, the window cleaner, even a passing lorry driver – waiting at the traffic lights – perplexed by someone at an open window, laughing at nothing in particular; breathing, dancing around, singing about kiwi fruit, mangos and bananas, patting the air as if they were building an invisible brick wall.

What is going on? "Laughter yoga" I tell my friends "is the brainchild of a physician. It's good for you. It's in schools, hospitals, care homes, prisons. Even the military and big business! Haven't you heard?" Laughter, as we all know, is infectious. And the

benefits, as Mr Google will tell you, are no joke.

Evidence-based research suggests that laughter yoga brings calm into our troubled world. A world with its many anxieties and concerns. To laugh with others across geographical boundaries fosters good relations. World peace is something we badly need right now, wouldn't you agree? All Judith's laughter yoga classes are now online, via Zoom. On average, around seventy-five members join the class she leads monthly for the Trust. Laughter yoga is catching on everywhere. You could be a part of it. I recommend it wholeheartedly. Why not give it a try?

Contact Judith at: judyalaughing@gmail.com to enquire about joining her twice-weekly Edinburgh u3a classes. Or look up the Trust website to book for the monthly u3a Trust class – every second Wednesday.

Daralyn Hammond

Book groups share suggestions

Janine Aldridge, Learning Officer for the Third Age Trust, has set up an online forum for all u3a book groups in the UK to enable them to share ideas on running their groups, and to recommend books that their members have enjoyed.

As the Trust's subject adviser for book groups, I welcomed the initiative: "The forum has met twice already, I've put the latest recommended books on my subject adviser page, which also includes hints on running a book group. You can find this at www.u3a.org.uk/learning/subjects/book-clubs. To join the forum, please email Janine at janine.aldridge@u3a.org.uk."

We hope that Edinburgh's book group leaders will take part in this initiative.

Richard Peoples

Astronomy Group

"The Industrialisation of Space" How To Solve The World's Energy Crisis and Work Towards Net-Zero.



The Eu3a Astronomy and Science Groups with speaker **Will Whitehorn** and his two guests.

Image credit: Simon Murray Eu3a.

"The Industrialisation of Space" was the first in-person Astronomy Group meeting since March 2020. We returned to Napier University in June this year, using the technology honed through the previous two years, to deliver a hybrid meeting, courtesy of George Cleland and Andrew Robertson.

This was an ambitious and, perhaps, controversial subject for an Astronomy Group lecture. In astronomy we tend to look back; back as far as the "Big Bang" 13.8 billion years ago. In our most recent talk, we faced the other way and looked to the future. A future which, thanks to technology, gives us hope. We all need hope and **Will Whitehorn** gave us that in a superb presentation entitled "The Industrialisation of Space", a term he coined 19 years ago.

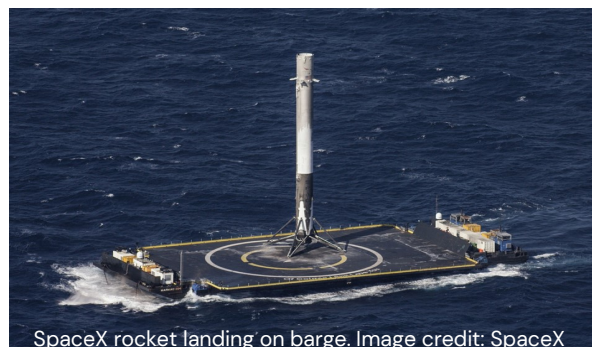


Layers of Earth's Atmosphere.

Image credit: Inna Bigun / Science Photo Library

Space: imagine that you can defy gravity; head upwards in your car; drive at 60mph and in an hour you will reach the edge of space. Keep going. What will you find there? You will find pristine views of the Universe and a deluge of radiation. Unlike planet Earth, we humans cannot do very much harm to space, though it can certainly harm the humans who venture into it and the essential technology that we put there.

For Space use to be sustainable the cost must come down. The Apollo Space Program, the missions to the Moon, cost 10% of the USA's GDP. Compared to that of 1980, the cost per kilogram of payload to low earth orbit by 2020 had reduced by a factor of 100. It is anticipated that it will drop equally dramatically in the future. Satellites are becoming smaller and lighter. Together, this will make the use of space sustainable.



SpaceX rocket landing on barge. Image credit: SpaceX

We now have re-useable rocketry with the ability to land on ships. We can take science into space using carbon composite space ships. A Boeing 747 can launch rockets into space, getting rid of the first, expensive, part of the launch. All this is also dramatically reducing the cost.

Can we get to net zero without using space? With a world population of eight billion, even in the best of times, the Earth is struggling to produce sufficient food to feed us all. As the world's population increases so will the challenges.

Food mapping data from satellites will enable us to decide where to plant and where food production is being affected by climate change; thus enabling us to increase food production. Data centres will be the first to be situated in space as these are now the Earth's biggest industrial polluters. We will have broadband servers in space.

Of immediate interest is the planned use of very efficient solar panel arrays in space, using energy from the sun, beaming the energy down 24 hours a day to antennae situated between the wind turbines at sea. These turbines are already connected to the grid. Sea wildlife is thriving in these turbine areas. Big companies are now starting to put together the first prototype which will use a small CubeSat to send power down to a location on the planet.

The driver to all this happening will be our need to respond to climate change. We have three to four decades to sort it out. Humans are not damaging the planet; we are damaging our ability to live on the planet. The planet will survive and will survive even a nuclear attack.

Science and technology alone will not solve all our problems. We will need the world's people coming together to do that. Will Whitehorn admits that it will be hard to take the public forward and that the impetus will be driven by our concern over climate change. Change is never easy. He, together with the world's billionaires and the people working in this developing field are leading the way but it takes the mind-set of us all to take on the future to save the human race.

Will Whitehorn is Chancellor of Napier University, a Scottish businessman educated in Edinburgh and Aberdeen, ex-President of Virgin Galactic and President of UK Space.

2022 and the world faces many problems. Will gave us hope and, at the same meeting, Alan Pickup showed us the enduring beauty of the night sky for June, July and August.

"Astronomy encompasses all human beings; it can link people together and give them a common theme: we all share the same Sky and Earth."
Sheila Kanani, RAS.

If you wish to learn more about astronomy, please join us (numbers permitting) for a trial session the second Wednesday of each month at Napier University, Merchiston Campus.

Contact Pat Williams to reserve a place.
[Edinburgh U3A: Astronomy \(u3asites.org.uk\)](http://u3asites.org.uk)

Film Appreciation Group 5

The Edinburgh U3A Film Appreciation Group 5 meets on the second Wednesday of each month, except September, 2022, at 2.00pm in the film theatre of Edinburgh Cine & Video Society (ECVS) at 23a Fettes Row, Edinburgh, EH3 6RH.

After each film showing there will be an opportunity to review the film, with tea and coffee served. A donation of £3 to the ECVS is suggested to cover refreshment and heating expenditure. Access to the premises is down steps and there is no disabled access. Bus services to Fettes Row are 27, 23 and 36. Contact Stewart Emm: stewart.emm@yahoo.com

October 12: The Man from Laramie (PG) Starring James Stewart as a resolute vigilante obsessed with finding the man responsible for his brother's death. With stunning scenery and explosive action sequences, this is classic western adventure at its best.

November 9: Flanders (18) tells the story of a group of young men who go to fight in an unarmed war with brutal consequences. Juxtaposing rural images of their home life against a often savage and unrelenting atmosphere. French with English subtitles.

December 14: Brick Lane (15) tells the story of Nazneen whose life is turned upside down. After an arranged marriage at the age of 17 to an older man, she exchanges her home in a Bangladeshi village for a block of flats in London's East End. Set in multicultural Britain this is a story of love, cultural differences and ultimately, the strength of the human spirit.

Current Committee

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Group Coordinator 5 (Groups T-Z):
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Assistant Webmaster: **Jean Knox**

Visits: **Ann Kerrigan**

Contact details can be found in the **Contact** (password protected) area of the website.

Editor's note

A special thank you to all those who contributed to this edition. Remember, it's **your** magazine and everyone can have a story to tell – amusing or thought provoking, factual or imaginative.

Further information on themes for the next edition and guidance for submitting articles will be available in the Bulletin and on the Website.

Contributions should be sent, 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) contact Maggie on 07808 319485.

The Clarion team of **Norma Emm**, **Colin Stevenson** and myself are joined by **Trish O'Brien** who has contributed a number of articles to Clarion over the years. 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

Maggie Gilvray