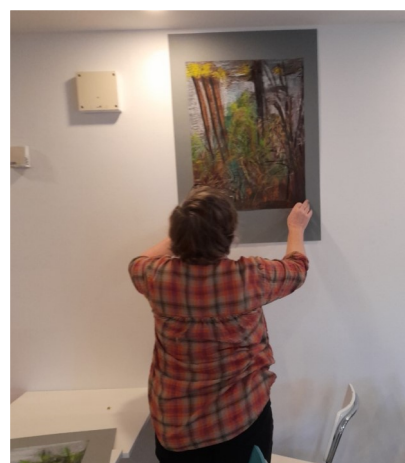
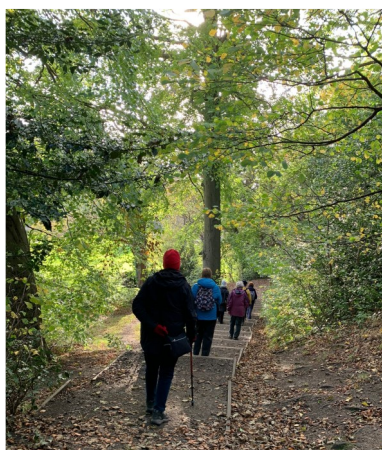




Clarion is the magazine of Edinburgh u3a and is published bi-annually with contributions from and about individual members and groups. The **Bulletin** is published monthly on-line and contains brief updates on forthcoming events and group news.



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# Letter from your Chair

## Richard Peoples

*Chair, Edinburgh u3a*



At last there's some good news that Covid infection rates may be slowing, so let's hope that Edinburgh u3a members can return to all their normal activities some time soon. But at the time of writing, we must still abide by Scottish Government guidance to make sure that everyone is kept as safe as possible.

We've had some correspondence about unvaccinated members attending u3a events. There are many different opinions on this, so we took advice from the Third Age Trust's solicitors to ensure that we take whatever steps are necessary to ensure members' safety while at the same time maintaining our policy of openness and respect for individual members' rights. We have no wish to exclude members from taking part in our activities, but we ask unvaccinated members to record a negative Covid test result before attending any meeting. We hope that this is acceptable to the vast majority who have taken NHS advice and been vaccinated.

Our monthly meetings will continue online for the time being. One item of good news is that new members are continuing to join Edinburgh u3a despite the Covid restrictions, and our total membership is again well above 2400. We hope that those whose membership lapsed during the lockdowns will return to us soon, if they have not done so already.

This year the u3a movement in Britain celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Events and activities taking place include an anniversary quilt completion, a 'picnic in the park' throughout the UK in June, a u3a science network seminar in July, a conference on research and shared learning in July or August, and a 'Celebrating u3a' week in September in place of our usual u3a day. Part of Edinburgh's contribution will be an original stage play and video celebrating positive futures for older people. See page 3 for more details of this, and go to <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/40th-anniversary> for more on all the events.

Recently we have welcomed a number of new members to the Eu3a committee as others have reached the end of their period in office.

Our new treasurer is Alistair Christie. Alistair joined Edinburgh u3a in 2019 to participate in foreign language groups and was appointed treasurer at the 2021 AGM.



Chris Young has recently taken over as Secretary. Chris spent most of her working life as an arts administrator, firstly in children's literature and then across the arts. In retirement she loves hillwalking, cycling, and meeting friends and family.



Susan Miles became one of our Group Coordinators last year. She was born here but grew up and raised a family in Canada. Now that she's retired and her family is grown, she's come back to Scotland, "where there is always something interesting to see or do, even during lockdown."



Maureen Rooney, our new Web Administrator, used to work with a charity and was an exam invigilator. Nowadays she volunteers in a cafe, sings in a choir, plays the ukulele, tries to play bridge and is a member of a book group.



Dierdre Duffy is about to become our new New Members Secretary. Dierdre was born in Glasgow, studied Computing at Glasgow University and moved to London in 1982 with her husband and three year old son. She worked in the city for 25 years then retrained as an teacher and taught IT for 10 years. She moved back to Scotland in 2020 to be near her family in Glasgow. Her son and two grandchildren live in Seattle, USA.





We're still looking for one more Group Coordinator and an Internal Communications Coordinator to join our friendly committee. Please get in touch if you're interested in joining us.

We'll continue to let members know as soon as we hear of any changes that affect our operations and meanwhile thank you once again for your patience and for making the best of the current situation.

Richard Peoples

## u3a is 40!

### One Foot in the Future

We're making good progress with one of Scotland's contributions to u3a's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations – an original stage play and video that will celebrate what older people can do to enrich their lives and those of others. We know that many who are no longer working full-time contribute a great deal through volunteering, for example, but others can benefit by becoming more active. We aim to show how older people have overcome obstacles to achieve things that are inspiring, creative and of great benefit to themselves and the wider community.

The title 'One Foot in the Future' is a nod to the popular TV sitcom 'One Foot in the Grave' – but with a more positive view of retirement than that portrayed by the curmudgeonly Victor Meldrew. The play and video are being put together in Edinburgh by a small team of playwrights, who have received dozens of story ideas from around the UK. They are now working to produce a script to be given to a group of professional actors, director, stage and video producers, who will bring the play to life.

We've been promised match funding for the project up to £5000 by the Third Age Trust and we're now applying for additional funding from various arts and social welfare organisations.

The project has academic support from the University of Stirling, who have been running a research project under the title 'Reimagining the Future in Older Age.'

We're planning a celebrity premiere to launch the show on **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> September** at the Netherbow Theatre, part of the Scottish Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh's Royal Mile. There will be two more

performances the following day. The video version of the play will be made available throughout the u3a network in the UK. We'll publish information about booking tickets for the live shows and about the video version later in the year.

Richard Peoples

## Membership Update

We advised members last year that we were changing our membership year and fees. Our new membership year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March starting on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 and this will tie in with our financial year. Our fees will now be £10 for individual members and £20 for joint members with standing order payments due on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 and annually thereafter.

Please remember to amend your standing orders for the amount and the date of payment. We can't make any changes to these – only the account holder can do this. Internet banking normally allows you to make any changes online. Alternatively you should contact your bank to make changes.

Around 500 members paid on the previous standing order date of 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021. The majority of individual members paid £12 and due to the admin involved in refunds we previously said that we would treat the additional £2 as a donation. The payment will also be treated as an early payment. Some joint members made the previous payment of £17 so I will contact these members requesting the additional £3 by 1<sup>st</sup> April.

As we have about 2,000 standing order payments there is a significant amount of administration work required to update our system with these. It would be appreciated that you follow any requests to make payment, amend amount/date or make sure the correct reference is quoted to help with this.

Renewal information will be sent out to members in February each year. Standing order mandates will also be sent to any new members who have joined since 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020.

If you have any questions about this please contact me at [membership@edinburghu3a.org.uk](mailto:membership@edinburghu3a.org.uk).

Ann Ryan

## News & Views from outside Edinburgh

### U3a Scotland

It is a pleasure to see that u3a interest groups throughout Scotland are now beginning to meet face to face. People have missed that all important social contact. Zoom filled the gap but it was not the same as being together. Having said that I think that now we have embraced technology, it is here to stay. **u3a: Online Across Scotland** which started as a response to Covid will carry on. We have just launched a series of Coffee House Chats. Information can be found on the website.

I was up in Banchory a few weeks ago meeting the steering group for a new u3a in the area. This was a very upbeat meeting and I look forward to Banchory and District u3a starting very soon. I am delighted that Ayr u3a features in our new Third Age Trust promotional video. Do have a look at it on the Trust website. Also look out for u3a's appearance on Specsavers ads.

Lanark and District celebrate their 10th anniversary this year. Sadly I missed the "do" because of the weather. I wish them success and another ten years of Learning, Laughing and Living together.

On a sadder note, Turiff u3a is closing. Like many u3as it is difficult to find people to serve on committees. In the next few months I am hoping to run a workshop on how to retain and recruit committee members. Information will be on u3a:OnlineAcrossScotland when I have a date set.

Ann Keating

### Gold and Silver:

**Daralyn Hammond reminds us that one of the advantages of on-line group activities during the last 2 years was being able to join in and enjoy these while being exiled elsewhere.**

I am a member of Edinburgh u3a and much enjoy Judith Walker's online laughter yoga class. I also belong to East Berwickshire u3a as a member of their writing group.

I live in Norfolk.

Inspired by the wonderful Scots athletes in the curling competition that my husband and I have been locked into over the past days, I have written the following piece.

*"Gold and Silver"* is the name of a beautiful waltz by Franz Lehar, composer of Viennese operetta. In a concert at Warrington Technical College, around 1970, I sang on stage, the lyrics to this lilting melody with friends, I still remember all the words and when the orchestral version comes up on radio, I waltz around the kitchen, singing at the top of my voice. It's one of the tracks I would take to a desert island.

A different kind of gold and silver are much in the news as I write this. Those coveted medals at the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing – the journey demanding dogged determination, single-mindedness and a 'can-do' attitude. Qualities that we u3a members can apply to whatever is our passion, whether we are studying philosophy – or Russian – and whether we are studying them in 'live' classes or 'online' – the latter an excellent opportunity to tap into activities further afield.

It's the final day of the Olympics. We set our TV to record the women's team curling match during the early hours of the morning; Great Britain versus Japan. The Scottish girls were on fire in their semi-final against the favourites, Sweden, and won out in a nail-biting match. Fingers crossed they will repeat that success.

Bruce Mouat, Edinburgh boy, skip of the men's team who won a well-deserved silver medal against Sweden, is in the audience to cheer the ladies on. Bruce gets to lead Team GB out as flag-bearer at the closing ceremony and is delighted by that. Exciting stuff, this curling. We settle down to watch the recording. On tenterhooks on the first end as the Scots go two up. Great start.

Eve Muirhead from Perth leads out her team to a Scottish tune played by a Chinese pipe band, conducted by a panda! Eve had asked the people of Scotland to stay up to watch the match. So I hope you did! 'Don't get too excited but don't go to bed' .... says the commentator at the end of the seventh end with the score at 8-2 to GB. Tenth end and it's job done! We have the gold!

Daralyn Hammond

## Monthly Meetings

Monthly meeting continue to be held on Zoom for the time being. Typically, 150 – 200 people have been able to attend each of these meetings on the day. At the meeting on 16th. February, about half of those attending indicated they would be willing to attend in person. "Hybrid meetings" are also being considered but have proved technically challenging.

On **February 16th**, **Charlotte Maberly** of "Food Connects" spoke to the Edinburgh group about our burgeoning understanding of the complex microbial communities we rely on for our health. Recent research shows that every time we eat we are also nourishing a vast and complex population of microbes that inhabit our bodies – a population we have come to refer to as the 'human biome' or in reference to our gut, the 'gut biome'. We are beginning to understand just how much of our appetite, dietary preferences, cognitive functions, and immune system is determined by this microbial community. We also know that we are far from knowing the extent of how the human biome works.

Although we may feel these discoveries are new, an older and intuitive understanding of culinary traditions would suggest we have been in tune with our inner community for longer than we might think. Traditional wisdoms have long understood a link between our dietary health and the mysterious and fascinating world within the soil. The soil biome – like the gut biome – is an essential world that is little understood. Many contemporary writers and academics are fascinated by these complex and largely invisible communities and as they explore them, are discovering that we may need to seriously revise how we think about our diet, notions of health, and how we grow our food.

This talk was a whirlwind tour of some big issues, Charlotte has provided some recommended reading for those who would like to delve deeper.

ENDERS, G. 2015 *Gut: the inside story of our body's most underrated organ*.

MONTGOMERY, D & BIKLE, A. 2015. *The hidden half of nature: the microbial roots of life and health*. W. W. Norton & Co..

SPECTOR, T., 2015. *The Diet Myth: The Real Science Behind What We Eat*. London: Wiedenfeld & Nicolson.

WILSON, B. 2015. *First bite: how we learn to eat*. Fourth Estate.

LOWENFELDS, J. 2010. *Teaming with microbes: the organic gardener's guide to the soil food web*. Timber Press, UK

SCRINIS, G. 2013. *Nutritionism: the science and politics of dietary advice*. Columbia University Press.

GOLDACRE, B. 2009. *Bad science*. Harper Perennial.

BLYTHMAN, J. 2015. *Swallow this: serving up the food industry's darkest secrets*. Fourth Estate.

YONG, E. 2016. *I Contain Multitudes: the microbes within us and a grander view of life*. Ecco.

STUART\_SMITH, S. 2020. *The Well Gardened Mind: re-discovering nature in the modern world*

### March 16th. Steven Robb

Subject: "Edinburgh Post War Housing"

This is a follow up to Steven's fascinating talk when he looked at the dream of building houses fit for heroes returning from WW1,

### April 20th: Tim Tunley

Subject: 'Why Seafarers'

Tim is chaplain to the Mission to Seafarers Scotland, whose goal it is to care for the spiritual and emotional needs of seafarers of all ranks, nationalities and beliefs. Many of today's seafarers come from far away countries. They sign up for contracts that will take them far from their homes and families. Tim left Theological College in 2002 and was appointed as chaplain to the Mission in 2009 and has since visited many of the 90 ports in Scotland.

### May 11th: Dylan Childs

Subject: "Empty Kitchen Full Hearts"

Empty Kitchens, full hearts started as a volunteer team of out – of – work chefs in Leith helping people through a difficult period by cooking and distributing nutritious meals from surplus food to those struggling to feed themselves adequately during the pandemic. Since April 2020, they have distributed over one million meals free of charge.

## Poetry Page

### The Gift: Norma Emm

The sun plays hide and seek  
amid the clouds.  
It is her birthday.  
He is her first love.  
She is giddy with joy,  
radiant in the sunlight,  
laughing at the cloud burst.  
They dance together in the rain.

It is her birthday.  
He is her first love.  
She should have diamonds  
he thinks.  
I'll give you a necklace of raindrops  
he says.

Waiters glide discreetly, attentively  
between the diners.  
It is her birthday.  
He is her husband.  
He is taut with apathy.  
The diamonds hard, dazzling,  
mock the insincerity of his words.

It is her birthday.  
He is her husband.  
He shows the world his wealth  
with a gift costly, loveless.  
She yearns  
for a necklace of raindrops.  
Her youth

Norma's poem is included in a the first collection  
of short stories and poems published by the  
Creative Writing Group (See page 11)

### Storm: E J Bayliss

Five or so years ago, I wrote a poem about Shetland: how the shore is formed by the  
action of wind and sea over time. It ends on a calm optimistic note: a lull in the flow of deep time.

#### Shetland

The sea dredges the scalloped bays  
Scours out the gravel crescents  
Digs at the bottom of cliffs  
Dangles ledges  
Hammers out arches  
Thrusts into crevices and they yield  
Whittles stacks slap happy  
Sails over spits  
Whispers white sand into coves  
Sucks at the grassy fingers of land  
Unravels the typeface of fences and fields  
For the sea has all the time in the world  
To taunt the fat earth.

But today the sun calls a truce  
The sea and the sky go arm in arm  
And the horizon lines up straight and blue  
Skuas hunker down like hens  
On the hideaway castle cliff  
Pinks sniff the salty air  
Even fulmars pause at the top of a loop

All this, all will tremble and shudder and fall.  
But not yet.

#### In the aftermath of stormy weather.

Twice recently I have come across the effects of storm Arwen : the severe Northerly gale in  
November. The first was in Belhaven Bay near Dunbar. Walking on the sand at low tide, I saw how the  
storm surge had undermined the sandy fingers of land topped with green turf and Scots pine and  
toppled the trees headlong into the tidal reach. Along the new edge of land the turf lay higgledy  
piggledy like discarded pieces of carpet.

The second time I was walking near Peebles through commercial forest, when the wide path was  
completely blocked by a mass of fallen trunks and foliage. Going steeply downhill through undam-  
aged trees I found a way back to my route. From the other side of the narrow valley, I looked across  
to where I had been and was reminded of medieval warfare.

## Groups

While some groups closed over the last difficult two years, many have kept going or have recently re-started their activities. Over the last few issues of Clarion, we have featured how some groups have overcome the experience of lockdown and the resulting isolation to reach out to their members.

Eu3a currently has over 200 groups and here we feature some of their activities.

### Golf Group

#### Golf in a Scottish Winter

*'You're mad'*, said my mum as I left the house on my bike with my half set of second hand clubs on my back to cycle five miles to the golf course in the freezing rain. But she made sure there was a big pot of Scotch broth ready when I got home.

*'You're mad'* said my girl friend when I suggested I took her for her first game of golf. We played two holes in freezing fog where you couldn't see anything you hit more than 30 yards. I gave in after 2 holes and we went for a coffee instead. That was her last game of golf. We've been married nearly 50 years and she still wins at crazy golf.

*'You're mad'* said the starter at Carnoustie when Tom and I turned up in February to play in sleet and a howling gale off the North Sea. We enjoyed our visit to the tea hut at the 10<sup>th</sup> hole that day! I played to my usual poor standard, but got two off my handicap because the other mad souls played so much worse than usual that week.

*'You're mad'* said Ian when his caddy told him to drive 45 degrees right of the flag at 8<sup>th</sup> hole on the Old Course. The gale brought his ball to within three feet of the hole and he got a birdie.

*'You're mad'* said my daughter when I told her I only wear one glove when I play golf – however cold it is. *'You get a better feel of the club with your right hand if you don't wear a glove'* I said. I didn't admit that my fingers freeze to the shaft and I don't feel anything with my right hand from November to March.

*'We're mad'* we said to each other, as we played on rock hard ground where every shot bounced off at random, our shoes had blocks of ice stuck to the bottom and putting on the winter greens was a complete lottery. We got back to the

clubhouse to find George drinking a quiet coffee beside the heater. *'Lovely weather today – where were you?'* – we asked.

*'We're mad'* we said to each other, as we played in squelching mud after a week of rain. Balls didn't bounce – they disappeared into the mud as soon as they landed.

*'You're mad'* I said as Arlene fired her low runner straight at a huge bunker. *'Nae bother'* she said as the ball bounced on the frozen sand, out of the bunker, onto the green and ended up 6 inches from the cup.

*'They're mad'* we said about the young couple jogging past in their shorts and t-shirts as we stood on the tee wearing our six layers of thermal golf clothes.

You have to be mad to play in a Scottish winter – but on a sunny day, when the wind drops and you can see for miles in the crisp air – you get your reward. Friends for life, regular exercise, and so much to laugh about and remember. Nothing like it.

**Colin MacLean**

*Edinburgh u3a Golf Group*

The Edinburgh golf group has over 50 members. Most of us play every week at the Wee Braids course in Edinburgh – where we have our own handicapping system that takes account of our *'Blue Stakes Rule'* – that you get a free drop if you land in a group of trees that are younger than you are!

The tales in this short story, and many others, are shared in the coffee shop after our Monday round and have been submitted for inclusion in an anthology of *"Golf Memories"* to be launched in July in time for the 150th open in St Andrews. The underlying principle of the anthology is to trigger memories in those with dementia or going through difficult times.







## Tapestry

### Weaving a legacy: Golden Threads Re-awakened.

This is the story of a tapestry woven and assembled by a group of amateur tapestry weavers in Edinburgh during the lockdown of 2021. Many in the group were members of the Edinburgh u3a Tapestry group. The tapestry uses golden threads that had not seen the light of day for 70 years.

The story of making the tapestry started on a very cold day 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 when a friend Cathie Wright visited me in my garden to give me a box of threads collected by her grandmother Hedwig Philip. Hedwig was a German Jew who narrowly avoided the Holocaust leaving Berlin in 1941 to join family in Pennsylvania.

A skilled needlewoman, she collected golden threads and embroidered a Torah Mantle for the local synagogue. In 1951 she travelled with all her belongings to Britain to join her daughter in Newcastle. Hedwig died shortly afterwards. Her box of golden threads remained unopened, passed down to her daughter and then her granddaughter, Cathie.



The resulting tapestry pays homage to Hedwig's story. It is a modern secular tapestry using these historic golden threads woven with contemporary threads of reds and greys. Sixteen amateur tapestry weavers each chose and designed a panel drawing on the themes of Jewish heritage, refugee travel and survival, avoiding conflict, reaching out, building bridges and seeking to make the world a better place.

*From the Darkness*



*Tree of Life*



Cathie said this is 'a community enterprise that takes the threads from one spiritual tradition to universal themes that celebrate life and survival'.

The tapestry is now on display at Loudon's New Waverley Restaurant, just behind the High St at 2 Sibbald Walk, EH8 8FT. A good place for coffee with friends. The tapestry will move to other locations after Easter.

You can see a PowerPoint presentation documenting the story of the making of the tapestry in DropBox <https://www.dropbox.com/s/a9xf7yosa8q7dub/The%20story%20of%20GTR%20powerpoint.pptx?dl=0>

**Jackie Grant,**

Email: [jackieclairegrant@gmail.com](mailto:jackieclairegrant@gmail.com)



Credit for the photographs goes to Geoff Gardner, former leader of one of the Edinburgh u3a photography groups'.

Jackie included this quote in her presentation of the project. It seems appropriate to where we are today:

*Remember, it didn't start with gas chambers, it started with politicians dividing the people with "us v them" It started with intolerance and hate speech and when people stopped caring, became desensitised and turned a blind eye"*



## Art 2

### Exhibition at North Edinburgh Arts

The Art 2 group had been meeting in a lovely spacious light filled room at North Edinburgh Arts centre (NEA) in Pennywell.

The surrounding area of Pilton is rapidly growing into a lively multicultural community and the centre is undergoing a major redevelopment with the building of an extended creative hub to serve this expanded local community.

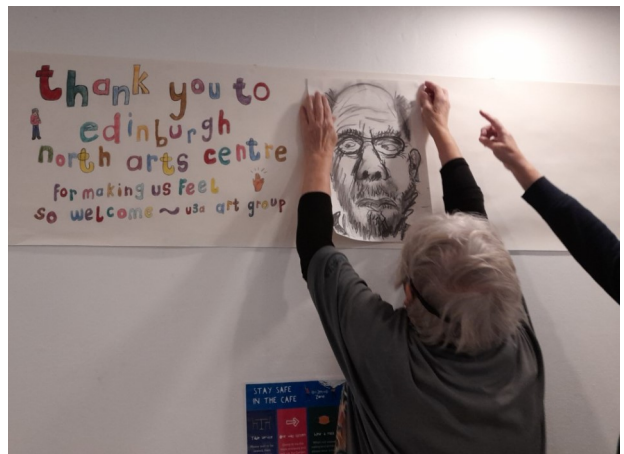
Unfortunately this meant that the centre has to close while redevelopment took place and we lost our base. We have been well looked after at the NEA by Sandra and Michelle in the café.

Linda Thompson, who has taken a leading role, among others, in keeping us going throughout lockdown by organising meet ups in her house and at various outdoor venues, organised a small exhibition in the café before the centre closed in December. We focussed on the very varied subjects that we had tackled over Zoom during the past year from portraits to the colourists.

**Maggie Gilvray**



Ann holds up Mary's Bird



## Creative Writing

### Getting Creative with Helen

'Small is beautiful' was a saying popularised by legendary German economist Ernst Schumacher and it's undoubtedly a mantra which could be applied to describe the activities of u3a Edinburgh's Creative Writing Group which meets every month in the Blackhall home of group leader Helen Steuart.

"It's a very tight knit group with a maximum of eight members and I like to keep it that way" says Helen who, after spending her formative years in England, moved north of the border over 40 years ago due to her husband's work commitments and settled in her adopted home of Edinburgh where her friends have now bestowed upon her the title of 'honorary Scot'. She has run this particular u3a activity group for 17 years.

Helen graduated in English literature from London University and subsequently pursued a career as a school teacher but the manner in which she runs the group is far removed from any perceived image of a latter day Miss Jean Brodie.

"It's completely democratic" she says, "any decisions regarding the group activities are made within the group itself."

"The way we operate is that, every time we meet, I will offer a subject for the members (including myself) to explore but there is absolutely no requirement to stick to that particular subject. We are all free to write about any subject which fuels our individual creativity and the format can be short story, poem, article or even a piece of prose. There are no specific guidelines. At the next meeting, each member will read out what they have written to the rest of the group and an open group discussion will follow each reading. Criticism is welcome although it has to be constructive, not negative."

"We all enjoy listening to, and commenting on, each other's work and it's fair to say that the range of subject matter over the years has been of a particularly wide ranging nature."

Helen, whose love of writing was spawned during her childhood years, describes herself as an amateur writer, a label she is happy to share with the other members of the group. "We're all amateurs" she stresses, but that hasn't prevented the group from getting its work recognised at a higher level.

Two booklets of short stories and poems, written by group members and edited by Helen, have been published, principally to allow the group's work to be shared amongst its u3a contemporaries. Both booklets have been put on sale, initially to cover publishing costs but also to raise funds for charitable purposes, with a portion of the proceeds from the second booklet being donated to St Columba's Hospice which provides palliative care in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

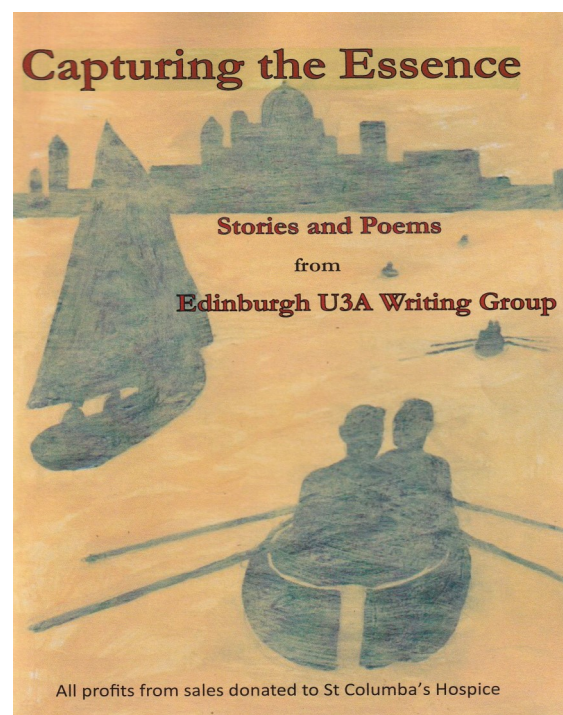
Individual members have also seen their efforts make it into mainstream print, exemplified by one such talented scribe who recently saw his work published in a national fishing magazine.

In addition, the group has also been recognised at u3a's annual Christmas parties, where members have been asked to read examples of their stories to the assembled audience.

The group itself reverted to Zoom meetings at the beginning of the pandemic but relaxation of restrictions has enabled them to meet in person for the past few months although that situation remains under constant review in line with Scottish Government guidelines.

As indicated, membership of the group is fully subscribed at present but, as and when vacancies arise, the u3a group register will be updated accordingly.

**Alan Fairley**





## Table Squash

### The Scotch Move: Tony's Invention Laid Bare.

Alan Fairley



When browsing through the extensive list of Activity groups which are open to u3a members in Edinburgh, there are some which jump off the page more than others, and one which undoubtedly falls into that particular category is the rather mysterious **Table Squash**

For anyone who has ever participated in the high tempo game of squash itself, the thought of its concept being transferred into an indoor, table-based environment is especially intriguing.

The Group is operated by 83 year old u3a member **Tony Lawrence** from his home in the Swanston area of Edinburgh and Tony does, in fact, not only lay claim to have invented the game back in the 1970s but indeed to also have expanded the original idea into an enhanced version of the game which he has called **Table Scotch**.

"I created the original game when I was a lecturer in cell biology at Glasgow University" recalled Tony, "and I used to play it along with my students. After that, the momentum fell away to some extent but I continued playing with family members, friends and neighbours".

"I set up the group within the u3a to generate interest but due to the restrictions of COVID, it hasn't really taken off as yet. Now that restrictions are slowly being eased, I'm hoping to recruit new members"

So – the big question. How is the game played?

Well, Table Squash itself is relatively straightforward. A standard table tennis table is pushed sideways against a wall with the net at right angles to the wall. The players stand either side of the net and play the ball against both their side of the table and the wall itself, sending the ball in the direction of their opponent's side. The basic rules of table tennis are followed as is the standard scoring system, ie first player to hit 21 points is the winner.

All good and well but this is where it gets complicated.

"I felt that just sticking to the basic way of playing table tennis perhaps didn't reflect the full range of skills which are demonstrated by players of the game. More cognisance should be taken of the rallies which occur during the game and I developed a fully automated scoring system which not only recorded the points gained by either player but also gave them credit for the quality of the rallies and the effectiveness of spin."

And that is how Table Scotch was created!

It's a highly complex affair which can be played either in the traditional manner of Player A versus Player B or can be played by a solo participant who can utilise the intricacies of the automated system to develop his/her skills and competencies.

There is also a discipline within the game known as the '**Scotch Move**' which is a match winning manoeuvre.

To fully explain the specific aspects of the game, and in particular the mystical Scotch Move manoeuvre, in an article of this nature would, by Tony's own admission, be extremely difficult and he feels that the best way to fully grasp the concept would be to see the game in practice, and, of course, to take part in the activity.

To this extent, Tony is happy to welcome new members to his Group and anyone interested can contact him on 0131 445 2657.

Further information regarding Table Squash/ Scotch as well as details of Tony's other interests, which include astronomy and poetry (including a poem he once sent to the imprisoned Naked Rambler) can be found on his website:

[tiplawpress.com](http://tiplawpress.com)

## Music Appreciation

I first offered Music Appreciation to two parallel groups, 3A and 3B, in 2012/13. Since then, in alternate years, I have offered recordings of instrumentalists and of singers. In each month I have provided recordings of a particular musician paired with recordings of the same pieces by other performers. For example, this year it is the turn of singers; so, in February I presented recordings of Tito Gobbi along with recordings of the same works by other singers. Comparing interpretations in this way is always interesting, and a fruitful source of agreement and disagreement among Group members.

In 2019/20 and 2020/21 I added Music Appreciation Groups 9 and 10. At present, Music Appreciation 9 presents less-well-known works by great composers; in each month I include

compositions of a particular type, for example trios or string quartets. Music Appreciation 10 is devoted to works by less-well-known composers, such as Thomas Tallis and Thomas Morley.

While it was feasible to hold actual meetings, it was of course possible for members to comment and discuss, and some very lively opinions were expressed. Regrettably, I am currently having to send the music to the Group's members by e-mails with mp3s attached, including all the recordings featured in the relevant programme.

May it be possible before very long to hold proper meetings again!

**Michael Hutchings**

## Tennis group 2's Golf Outing

I would definitely recommend trying out other skills or ventures within your groups. I joined our Tennis Group 2, here in Edinburgh, at the beginning of February 2018 when we were about six in number. It has now grown to 22 members, including my husband who joined in the summer of 2020. We meet every Friday morning and have so much fun and camaraderie. This summer one of our members, John Danzig, suggested we get together for a friendly golf competition amongst the group, making it all inclusive, inviting both those that had played golf before and novices. We chose a local pitch and putt course suggested by another member.

The chosen day to play, in July, was perfect, weather-wise. We booked three tee times and split into groups of three players of differing golfing abilities. We took the lowest score for each hole within each group and added them together over the nine holes we played. The group with the overall lowest score was declared the winner. After our lunch on the veranda of the Brasserie, some of us had a second round. The day was such a success we are planning to do it again.

**Susan Lindsay**



From left to right: Peter Hart, John Danzig, Bill Ure, Liz Ballantyne, Allan Lindsay, Carol Stevenson and Susan Lindsay.

## Allotment Group Wormeries

### "The Duddingston Tigers"

Right: Tiger "cub"



The u3a allotment group has been part of Duddingston Kirk's Glebe Project (now known as Jock Tamson's Gairden) for the past 4 years. In early 2020, two 250 gm packets of composting tiger worms arrived through my letterbox from Yorkshire, and we started our wormery project.

The tiger worm gets its name from its red and yellow striped body. These are voracious eaters, fast breeders and their "castings" produce high quality compost, which is used on the allotment.

They are, however, rather particular and don't do well if too hot (unlikely in Edinburgh, unless put into a shiny metal wormery and left in the sun – it was a particularly hot summer and they all died); too cold (below 8 degrees C, so if left outdoors, lots of insulation is required – they all survived); too wet (the worm "pee" has to be drained and collected as leachate or allowed to drain directly into the ground underneath); too dry (not a problem, unless exposed to direct hot sunlight); or poorly ventilated (open sides, ventilation holes, no tight fitting top, all allow the worms to get sufficient air).

The worm food is kitchen scraps (no citrus or onions; meat or dairy products) together with bits of paper bags, cardboard, egg cartons, used paper towels etc. Tiger worms do best in a wormery. Compost bins can be used but they don't do as well in a compost heap and will die out if put into normal soil.

There are many good videos on YouTube with hints on making your own simple wormeries, looking after the worms, harvesting worm compost etc. and these were very helpful when starting out.

The first (temporary) wormery was a small plastic crate with a cracked bottom and drilled ventilation holes in the sides, sitting on a tray to collect any leachate. It was spring and my garage was warm enough.

A small commercial plastic wormery

donated by a friend was then loaded with shredded paper, food scraps and the worms and placed in a shady place on the allotment. This was soon followed by a discarded wooden crate with the bottom knocked out. To keep it dry and warm, layers of plastic sheeting, an old blanket and a square of disused carpet were loosely laid directly on top of the worms and their food, with a couple of planks across the top in order to deter nosy dogs, foxes and hedgehogs. In winter, more insulation was added in the form of leaf litter and the worms seemed to thrive in their makeshift home.



Kitchen waste is added around once weekly and it takes at least 3 months for there to be enough castings to harvest, especially in winter when worm life is rather slow.

As they are such fast breeders, there has been an excess of worms generated over the past year and a half, so some have been provided to other interested u3a gardeners. The wormeries are also of considerable interest to passing visitors to Jock Tamson's Gairden, and also to those on their way to the adjacent Dr Neil's Garden.

Access to the allotment, and especially tending to the wormeries, during the worst of lockdown, proved to be a huge boon to my well-being.



Wormery in winter and below, in summer



**Richard de  
Soldenhoff**



## Miscellany

### Summer Visits

At the time of going to press, a visit to Stirling Castle is planned on 24 March 2022 but Ann Kerrigan is going to see how this trip goes before organising others.

### u3a Scotland Summer School

After the postponement of the 2020 and 2021 Summer Schools, The summer school for this year is booked for 16th–18th August. This will take place at the University of Stirling. The plan is to run 5 courses subject to demand and participants choose one topic to study.

**Ancient Civilisations of Mesoamerica:** Led by Maria Chester of East Berwickshire u3a

**Creative Writing:** Gilly Beckett, East Berwickshire u3a

**Exploring Poetry:** Peter Holmes, Forth Valley u3a

**Immunology – our Immune System: Friend or Foe?:** Prof. David I Stott, Bearsden and Milngavie u3a

**A Great Leap Forward? Scottish History 1750 – 1850:** Bill Bedborough, Dr Sheena Bedborough and Robert Hough, Forth Valley u3a; Professor Sir Geoff Palmer OBE, Professor Emeritus in the School of Life Sciences at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh

Book via

<https://u3asites.org.uk/files/s/scotland/docs/summerschoolbookingformaugust2022v1.pdf>

### Deaf Members & Masks

I am a deaf member. Last summer I was referred to a clinic at the Western General Hospital. My first visit lasted **three** hours and **all** the staff wore masks in the departments I visited. Fortunately I took a friend with me who took notes. It was quite an ordeal and left me exhausted. I wrote to the Health Board and asked if they could supply staff with clear masks at clinics when treating deaf patients. They took up my suggestion, and soon most of the staff I saw had clear masks for my appointments. Tell other deaf members not to be afraid to ask for them. It made such a difference!

Hilary Rae

## Cycle touring Group

### “1026 miles on shopping bikes”

If the u3a magazine “Third Age Matters” dropped through your letterbox recently, turn to page 51 and you will see an excellent article with some photos by Edinburgh u3a members Joan Cutting and Aled Owen on their inspirational 20 day cycle ride from Land’s End to John O’Groats last summer.

Richard Grant

### “The Choice of Subject is Yours”

We don’t have a letters page, but this one from David Syme, who is a regular contributor, is hard to resist. So if YOU have a burning topic for the next issue, let’s hear it. **ED**

“Well, Esteemed Editor, what a cop-out! The choice is ours, is it? You are asking us to consider the dishes on a 10,000 page menu? It’s not fair. If you had said: “Write about Bread” we would be off! I remember using white bread to rub out mistakes in my pencil jotter ..... then there is the white bread or brown bread debate, or which country produces the tastiest bread..... lots to work on.

You could have said: Write about “Footwear” – now there’s a subject we could go to town on! Or if you really wanted to stir up the readership, how about “Cycle Lanes on Edinburgh Roads” or “Are We Woked-out?”

Instead you offer us a blank sheet on which to write..... something.

I am reminded of the annual examination for entry into the Chinese Civil Service. Hundreds of hopeful scholars would arrive in Beijing to sit the test, having studied the wisdom and writings of Confucius, Dong Zhongshu, Mencius et al, only to be presented, on one occasion, with blank paper and the instruction:

*Write down all you know”.*

David Syme

## Current Committee

Chair: **Richard Peoples**

Vice Chair: **Louise Grimm**

Secretary: **Chris Young**

Treasurer: **Alistair Christie**

Membership: **Ann Ryan** (until AGM, then Liz Bell)

Group Coordinator 1 (Groups A-C):  
**Doreen Barr** (Louise Grimm as temp stand in)

Group Coordinator 2 (Groups D-I):  
**Keith Guy**

Group Coordinator 3 (Groups J-P):  
**Alan Huyton**

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

Group Coordinator 5 (Groups T-Z):  
**Louise Grimm**

Internal Communications: **Bruce Cowan**

Beacon Administrator: **Bruce Cowan**

External Communications: **Patrick Leach**

New Members: **Sheila Harvey**

Assistant Treasurer: **Jenny Clarke**

Web Administrator: **Maureen Rooney**

Technical Support: **Andrew Robertson**

Information officer: **Lachlan Paterson**

### Others behind the scenes

Bulletin Editor: **David Baird**

Assistant Membership 1: **Liz Bell** (until AGM)

Assistant Membership 2: **Graham Golding**

Clarion Editor: **Maggie Gilvray**

Safeguarding Officer: **Jane Garrett**

Diversity and inclusion: **Frank Ledwith**

Assistant Technical support: **Alan Mathieson**

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

Thanks to all members who sent in articles for this edition and to those we weren't able to include this time. Remember, it's **your** magazine and everyone can have a story to tell – amusing or thought provoking, factual or imaginative.

The **Autumn 2022 edition** is due out in **September**. Further information on themes and guidance will be available in the Bulletin and on the Website. Contributions should be sent, by **late July** preferably by email, to [clarion@edinburghu3a.org.uk](mailto: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.

Thanks to the Clarion team of **Norma Emm**, **Alan Fairley** and **Colin Stephenson**, and 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](mailto:membership@edinburghu3a.org.uk)

**Maggie Gilvray**

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