

# Fife u3a Newsletter March 2024

## Report from the Chair

Hello and welcome to our Spring Newsletter. You will notice that we have a new format and this is because Jess Lawson has stepped down from her position as Newsletter Editor. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jess for the hard work she has done over the years producing a colourful and entertaining Newsletter. Our thanks also go to Sheena Lawson for her support to Jess in proofreading the Newsletter before publication.

Our organisation is flourishing with many new members and great interest shown in our wide variety of groups. Our monthly meetings have been well attended and members have given very positive feedback about the New Year Lunch and the talk by James More about the planets. Our next monthly meeting is on 14th March at 2pm in St Bryce Kirk and our speaker is Alan Crombie who will inform us about "Kirkcaldy's Heritage in 50 Objects" This is a project undertaken to lead up to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Kirkcaldy Civic Society.

It's that time of year again! We need nominations for the committee and forms must be submitted to the secretary by 11<sup>th</sup> April. Please consider carefully the possibility of becoming more involved in the running of Fife u3a. There are many opportunities: committee member, group leader, volunteering at monthly meetings. Looking forward to hearing from you. Please look at the Fife u3a website to find out what's happening and to access the forms you need. Kind Regards,

Val Robertson (Chairperson)

## Canal Boat Visit

On a calm and sunny autumn day eight members of the Out and About group enjoyed an hour long trip on the Union Canal in Edinburgh. We joined the boat at its mooring behind Polwarth Parish Church. It is run by a charitable organisation called "People Know How" together with the parish church. Their aims are to "nurture community cohesion and wellbeing".



The "All Aboard" was bought in 2021 and crewed by volunteers. They made us very welcome, opening up the nearby church hall for us to wait in and, once on our way, providing us with mugs of tea, coffee and biscuits.



We chose to sit outside at the front of the boat and travelled west for about half an hour passing a barge, rowers, some ducks and several walkers. The autumn colours of the trees and the gardens coming down to the water's edge were all very pleasing. After a skilfully executed three-point turn, closely watched by a gentleman and his dog on the towpath,

we made the return journey, a bit cooler in this direction, but still enjoyable - a peaceful contrast to the busy city streets not far away.

When asked for words to describe, suggestions included: “fabulous, pleasant, well organised, relaxing”

And all agreed that a longer trip on a summer’s day would be just the thing.

## Film and Theatre Group

Great News! The Adam Smith Theatre is now showing films and live screenings. All the information is on the events page of our website. A group of us gathered on 14<sup>th</sup> Feb to view “The Great Escaper”. This was Glenda Jackson’s last film, and it told the story of a war veteran, played by Michael Caine, who at the age of 90 made his own way to France for the D Day anniversary. The Breakfast movies are on Wednesdays at 11am and there is a discussion group held after each film by Adam Smith Staff. The first live screening was on 16<sup>th</sup> Feb “Johnny Absolute Flies Again”, based on Sheridan’s “The Rivals”. Most of the laughs came from Caroline Quentin’s portrayal of Mrs Malaprop.

A few of us ventured to the Lyceum in Edinburgh to attend the matinee performance of “Two Sisters” by David Grieg. An interesting production involving drama students and some input from the audience. We’ve got lots of interesting outings planned so please check the website for information.

## Fife U3A is offering cashless payments!

Cash will still be taken, but we know that many of our members use their debit or credit cards for payments. So we now have a card reader to take your money at the Monthly Meetings (and it will be available for other purchases in future).

When you use your card, your bank/credit card statement will probably show “SUMUP \*FIFE U3A DUNFERMLINE GB”

We hope you will find it useful.

Susan Kirkwood, Treasurer.



## Craft 'n' a Cuppa Group generates nationwide interest!

As well as working on our own projects (lots of knitting, crochet and embroidery) and joining in a few gentle exercises to maintain hand and shoulder mobility, our Craft Group tries to have a new activity that we can all try out every month. Recent experiments have included simple origami hearts and flowers for Valentine’s Day, Christmas card and gift tag making, napkin folding and upcycling paper flowers from magazines – see the website for photos of our creations.

We also put our photos up on the Fife u3a X (formerly Twitter) site (search for @Fife\_u3a). A few of our posts have been picked up by the national u3a X page, leading to views from across the country. Most successful so far has been our button flower making entry, which

drew attention to Fife u3a from over 400 people, and likes from u3a's as far flung as Ilkley and St Austell!

If you'd like to have a go at our next project – Easter bonnet collage, please come along on Tuesday 5 March, 10.30am at KUSI. You'll be made very welcome.

## Garden Group update

Following a very successful meeting of Garden Group members, it was decided, that as we were unable to appoint a leader for the group, we would adopt the following strategy. A different member of the group would arrange the outing each month, be responsible for informing other members of the arrangements, etc. All agreed that they were happy to proceed with this. Please keep looking at the events and groups pages for any news about the garden group and, in fact, all groups.

Jean Black, Groups Coordinator.



## Garden Group outing

On 15<sup>th</sup> February nine members of the group enjoyed a lovely walk along the "snowdrop path" in Aberdour. This woodland walk runs along the south side of the high street along the edge of the golf course.

We enjoyed early sunny spring weather with cool winds and great views across the river Forth including a slightly misty Inchcolm island in the distance. Another treat along the way was the "makeshift" library where walkers were invited to take a book for a small donation.

The snowdrops were in full flower with daffodils just beginning to peek to the surface. After an hour of gentle walking, good conversation and exercise, we were rewarded with cake and coffee in the Bistro in the high street. A lovely afternoon out.

## Out and About Group Visit to Surgeons' Hall, Edinburgh



This was a second visit for the Group. There is certainly a lot to see: The Wohl Pathology and the History of Surgery Museums and the Dental Collection. A temporary exhibition is "In Safe Hands, the Battle for Midwifery".

After coffee at the adjoining 1505 café the group crossed the courtyard to the main entrance to explore the different levels of the building, which was designed by renowned architect William Playfair and has been in use since 1832.

The History of Surgery detailed accounts of surgery in 6<sup>th</sup> century Egypt and India and there is evidence of medical schools in Greece and Rome at that time. In 1505 the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh was established with rules for membership and the monitoring of standards.

Much could be learnt from the dissection of bodies and grave robbing was widespread, leading to the murderous practices of Burke and Hare. There is a short film beside an interactive dissection table. The Museum focuses also on important discoveries in anaesthesia, such as chloroform by James Young Simpson and the control of infection by anti-septics as used by Joseph Lister.

In the Pathology Museum, the different categories of surgery are given their own space, with Touch Screen information easily available in each. Surrounding shelves display jars containing relative parts of the body. Some examples are: orthopaedic, paediatric, vascular surgery etc.



The Midwifery exhibition traces the history of the profession from when it was community based. From the 18<sup>th</sup> century male midwives became increasingly involved and James Young Simpson made a lasting contribution to safe childbirth with his use of chloroform and design of obstetric instruments such as forceps. Elsie Inglis set up the first maternity hospital in 1901.

Our visit ended with a short, illustrated lecture: “Dubious Guests, the Parasites that Feed on Us.” The speaker had examples of beef tapeworms and pork tapeworms beside her in jars. She also spoke about lice and the importance of cleanliness in avoiding all these unwelcome visitors.

## Other u3a meetings, groups and events

As part of our membership of the wider u3a network, there are events and groups available to each member. Here are some you may be interested in.

**Online Across Scotland u3a** run a number of online groups and have a monthly meeting at 4pm on the first Thursday of each month. See <https://u3asites.org.uk/onlineacrossscotland/events> for more information. The talk on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March is about how the progress (or lack of progress) in meeting the Climate Emergency is measured for Scottish Councils.

**u3a in Scotland** is running a residential Summer School this year from Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> to Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> August. There are 6 topics (you choose one). Booking is now open. More information at <https://u3asites.org.uk/scotland/page/79029>

**Online learning events** (UK-wide) – see <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>. For example “Aviation Network Meeting: Time is money, Concorde was Prestige” or “From Pleasure Gardens to Theme Parks” – a historical view.

**We hope you enjoyed the latest edition of the newsletter and, remember, it's your newsletter. Let us know what's going on in your groups for inclusion in the next edition.**