



GLASGOW WEST END U3A October 2023 Newsletter

Dear All

I can't believe it is October already - the year is flying by so quickly.

I'm very pleased to say that in the last few days we have welcomed our 400th member to Glasgow West End u3a. Its lovely to see the u3a growing again after the pandemic and to have a record number of members. I sincerely hope our new members enjoy their memberships and find groups and activities that they love.

We have another new group this month - we have had a lot of requests for a shorter walks group - read below for more details on this.

Details of this month's monthly meeting on Thursday (19th) is also below and looks fascinating. Graeme Smith's talk is entitled 'The Theatre Royal: Entertaining a Nation'. The talk will be at 10.30 as usual but please note that **for this month only there is a change of venue**.

The hall at Novar Drive is out of action as they are having a new sound system put in so we will instead be in Broomhill Hyndland Church (The Kingsborough Sanctuary) at 79 Hyndland Rd, Glasgow G12 9JE. It is only a couple of minutes walk away from our usual venue in Novar Drive. Unfortunately, we can't serve soft drinks but will be able to serve squash and water.

We are in the process of organising our post-Christmas lunch which will be after our monthly meeting on Thursday 18th January. Full details shortly but please save the date meantime.

Finally, I also wanted to confirm that our December monthly meeting will be a week earlier than usual on Thursday 14th December at the hall in Novar Drive. This will be our AGM followed by our Christmas party. Again, more details will follow.

The formal notice of the AGM will be circulated in November. If anyone has any motions that they would like to put forward for the meeting please let me know. It is also an opportunity to join our Executive Committee. Being a committee member is enjoyable and interesting and lets you take a role in shaping the future of our u3a. If you would like to put yourself forward or would like more information about this please let me know.

As always thank you for your continued involvement and support.

Gail Donaldson - Chair u3a GWE

Monthly Meeting: Thursday 19 October 2023

Graeme Smith: 'The Theatre Royal: Entertaining a Nation'

Graeme is a Chartered Accountant, having qualified with a firm now known as Ernst & Young, or EY. His career has been mainly involved in economic development, the building of New Towns and in Urban Renewal especially in the many projects of the Scottish Development Agency headquartered in Glasgow. In a private capacity he has helped to save a number of historic buildings and encouraged new uses.

On retirement he has become an author and publisher, and continues to be a campaigner.

His latest book is **Glasgow's Blythwood**. The first of his five books to date was the **Theatre Royal: Entertaining a Nation**, an idea he had in the early 1990s when he was a director of Scottish Opera and the Theatre Royal. Graeme has started researching and writing a new book about **Dr Tom Honeyman**, the city's most famous Director of Art.

He is also a contributor to a new book to be published next year - The history of **Shipbuilding & Engineering at Fairfield's Govan**.

Graeme is a member of Glasgow Art Club and a past convenor of the Friends of Glasgow University Library. His grandchildren are amazed that their Grandpa can do things!

<https://u3asites.org.uk/glasgow-west-end/events>

Local History Group

The group normally meets on Mondays. We enjoy a mix of visits to places of historical interest and presentations, both in-person and via Zoom.

Our September event was a guided tour of Victoria Park and the Scotstoun area, led by Bearsden and Milngavie u3a member, Norrie Reid. It was incredible to find out how many things we've walked by so many times without really noticing them. Who knew there was a fundamental bench mark in the middle of the park? (Full marks if you even know what that is - we didn't!)

Our October event will be a guided tour of the Willow Tea Rooms.

<https://u3asites.org.uk/glasgow-west-end/page/84166>

History Book Group

The group reads non-fiction history books and meets monthly on Mondays in the Three Crows in Crow Road to discuss them.

Below is a review by one of our members of our September read, 'The Romanovs', by Simon Sebag Montefiore.

'This book is a review of The Romanov Dynasty and spans some 300 years. It's a thorough account of how Russia was ruled during that time and must have involved intensive research by the author. It combines historical facts with personal details of each of the emperors and tsars filling in lots of gaps in our knowledge. What most of them - especially the early ones - had in common was a love of brutality. Some of the stories are shocking. They also appeared to have interesting love lives! A long read but worthwhile.'

Our October read is 'Aftermath: Life in the Fallout of the Third Reich', by Harald Jähner'. We'll put a review of it in the next newsletter.

<https://u3asites.org.uk/glasgow-west-end/page/85727>

Art Appreciation Group 1

Some time ago the group visited the John Byrne exhibition at Kelvingrove. Everyone enjoyed it enormously. John Byrne is just such a talented artist. I visited the exhibition three times and each time enjoyed it a little more. What I love about John Byrne, apart from his great talent, is that how beneath his art (and theatre) there is such a subtle and brilliant humour and that is what I noticed more of each time I visited the exhibition. Most of us will remember the wonderful Tutti Frutti, written by John Byrne and recently dug up again by the BBC.

Last month we visited the Peter Howson exhibition in Edinburgh. Peter Howson is in my view another great artist. Sadly, his art is coloured by his own troublesome life, particularly his harrowing experience as war artist during the terrible Bosnian war. There is very little humour. Nevertheless, he is a huge talent and his work is breathtaking, very moving and full of emotion.

I am very proud that we have two such brilliant artists living and working locally, both graduates of the Glasgow School of Art.

In my view, no great skill or depth of knowledge is required to appreciate art, only a reaction. After all, the most significant art movements over the centuries were created as a reaction to what came before or by events of the time.

<https://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=960&page=80043>

Coffee and Chat

This continues to be popular. The next one on the 4th November. Puppet Theatre 2pm

A great way to meet new members and new members to meet more experienced members

<https://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=960&page=97567>

Art Appreciation Group 2

Visit to Studio of Alexander Stoddart (King's Sculptor in Ordinary in Scotland)

"Mesmerising"; "Overwhelming"; "What a performance!"

In September, our group enjoyed visits to the Paisley studio of Alexander Stoddart. A prolific sculptor, 'Sandy' works in the neoclassical style and draws inspiration from the art of ancient Greece, often depicting subjects from classical culture and mythology. Many of his statues depict significant historical figures, with his famous works of David Hume and Adam Smith placed on the Royal Mile in Edinburgh. His statues of Italia and Mercury stand in the Merchant City quarter of Glasgow, while his 70 ft marble frieze representing subjects of the Homeric epics is displayed in the Queen's Gallery in Buckingham Palace. This Glasgow West End u3a visit proved to be extremely popular and the artist very generously welcomed two different groups to ensure that everyone who wanted to come along was able to do so.

The studio is situated in the University of West of Scotland Paisley campus and consists of two large rooms packed with the plaster casts of many of the sculptor's most famous works, as well as studies in clay of his current works in progress. A smaller workroom is filled with materials and tools. We had been previously warned that the studio was a 'health and safety free zone' and so it proved. If we thought we would be limited to finding out more about the process of sculpting, then we were very wrong!

Before entering the actual studio, Sandy offered us a taste of what was to come by introducing the work of the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, his philosophical pessimism and links to Indian philosophical ideas. The importance of the relationship between philosophy and art remained a consistent theme throughout our visit with Sandy sharing his hugely knowledgeable, (sometimes challenging!) and entertaining views with the group. Of course, once inside the actual studio, we did also learn about the process of

producing the work, from the initial sculpting in clay to the final casting of the piece. Sandy's work is much sought after across the world as well as in the United Kingdom.

Feedback from members of both visits was overwhelmingly positive, notwithstanding occasional differences of opinion.



<https://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=960&page=129427>

Photography

September's theme was to photograph in and around Kelvingrove Museum. The weather encouraged us to look inside for inspiration as well as warmth. Members found ways to freshen up views of a well-trodden venue.

The next theme is an old favourite for this time of year: Autumn. Find out more about the club here:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/glasgow-west-end/page/80042>

Science and Technology

The next two meetings of the Science and Technology Group will be as follows.

Wednesday 18th October: Lauren Addis: "Flooding and Global Warming"

Wednesday 15th November: Neil Metcalf: "Is it too late to save the Capercaillie?"

Meetings take place on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 3pm at Partickhill Bowling Club, 46 Partickhill Road, Glasgow G11 5BY.

For more information about the group and to join, click the pigeon on the group web page.

<https://u3asites.org.uk/glasgow-west-end/page/77856>

Short Walks

First meeting 24th November 11am.

A slow short walk around Gartnavel walled garden.

(We meet at 11am at Bingham's pond. After the walk we will return for coffee at GWR at 12.)

To join the group, please click on the pigeon to send a message.

<https://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=960&page=131885>

Bridge

We are a group of people who meet to play social bridge. It is fun, it is friendly, it is non-competitive and easy going. It is all about enjoying playing the game!

We meet in The Three Crows in Jordanhill, across Crow Road from the railway station, at 2pm on Monday afternoons. They do not charge us for using their facilities but we usually buy teas/coffees.

All levels of skill are welcome but it is not suitable for people who wish to learn to play for the very first time.



Click on the pigeon at the link below to contact us if you are interested.

<https://u3asites.org.uode/u3asite.php?site=960&page=124030>

MOTO

MOTO (Members on Their Own) is for those of us who socialise on our own. The group is for people who want to meet and plan a varied programme of social and other activities. The members of the group might meet up for a coffee and then arrange to get together - either in small groups or larger groups - for whatever takes their fancy e.g. a cinema visit, meal out, day trip etc. It is up to members to suggest what they want to do.

The group has been very active with another informal monthly get-togethers at Cottiers which was so well attended we took over most of the bar. It is a great chance to catch up and discuss the months ahead. We have an active WhatsApp Group with lots of ideas and suggestions of events taking place locally. Regular updates are sent to members not in WhatsApp.

Some of the activities that members have taken part in September:

- Several of us visited the Fleur de Villes Exhibition at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh and were amazed by the exhibits from around the globe
- Back through to Edinburgh to the National Museum of Scotland for "Beyond the Little Black Dress" which was incredible with fashions from a variety of eras and nations
- Celebrating the Carlton Weavers was a very successful event, there were several parts to the day including a commemoration service, walk lead by Peter Mortimer, talk by Elspeth King and followed by a night of music (and a free macaroon bar).

Many thanks to Julia who not only laid a wreath during the ceremony but also supplied a photo of a direct Weaver's descendant, Jim Boyes, giving his speech.

Some of the items that we have already started booking include:

- Christmas at the Conservatoire
- Oran Mor Christmas Panto
- Nelson Mandela Tribute in the Oran Mor

Our October meeting will be held on Wednesday, 11th October at 2pm in Cottiers, please come and join us. Members are encouraged to suggest events.

We are enjoying getting to know one another and welcoming new members. As you can see the emphasis is on FUN.

(You may contact us at via the link below using the Pigeon.)



<https://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=960&page=126077>

Recorder Playing

The u3a Recorder Group has made a fresh start for the next session towards the end of this year.

We are now a well-established group and were delighted to take part at the 'Presentation' meeting last June.

At present we are looking for new Recorder players to join us.

The level of previous experience playing the instrument not essential, being able to read music helpful.

Contact us via the link below:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=960&page=85729>

Knitting

The knitting group received an unusual request from the Children and Families team at Bridgeton Health Centre. They were looking for knitted boobs to use with new mums, to demonstrate aspects of breast feeding...

The group obliged, and delivered the end products to Nicola, the team leader, on 22nd September. Knitting the boobs caused great hilarity, and a lot of bystander interest in our new meeting place, the Clarice Pears building at Glasgow University, which houses the School of Health and Wellbeing.



<https://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=960&page=1041>

gweu3a Calendar

The new 2024 calendars with pictures from our Photography Group will be on sale at future meetings for £5 each.

U3a Member takes on the Bridge!

GWEu3a member Helen Wright recently abseiled from the Forth Rail Bridge for charity. Chest Heart Stroke Scotland (CHSS) gave 600 people the chance to test their 'daringdo'!

"The chance to abseil from the Forth Rail Bridge popped up on my facebook feed months ago and I thought 'why not?' Before that day I had no idea who CHSS were nor how many people live with a condition that this organisation can give support to – in Scotland it is 1 in 6 people – but as I thought about it realised that I knew several stroke survivors and at least one friend with COPD. Nearer to the abseil date another friend gave money to the fund as she has Long Covid and the CHSS website offers valuable resources to manage that condition.

October the 8th drew nearer and I arranged to meet a friend from Queensferry to take photos and video, worked out my travel plans and all was set. The night before I had the most delightful surprise of a text from my sister and her husband who were at the Bridge, having travelled up from Cambridge to witness this event and support me too!

CHSS organisation was superb on the day, the result of 18+ years of running this challenge. Register at The Hawes Inn, move on down a well-oiled line of 'helmet' – 'harness' – 'gloves' – 're-check harness' – 'ropes information' – 'steps instruction' – re-check harness'.

Then the walk out on the maintenance footway to be assigned a ropes manager, Pete in my case. After attaching abseil rope and safety rope we managed to find a way for me and my arthritic hip to climb over the safety rails without too much loss of dignity! A quick official photographer smile, then I was away!

Descent is at your own choice of speed, the abseiler controlling the speed by tighter or looser gripping of the rope with the gloves. I chose to go slowly and enjoy the view, also thinking this might be my only chance to do such a thing! The height of 53 metres makes for some very small people at the bottom and I was halfway down before I clearly spotted my supporters to give them a cheery wave! Then a soft landing on the sand and a well-oiled de-kit process kicked in.

If we are offered the chance to do something out-of-the ordinary I'd recommend thinking about it. It's not every day I'll be abseiling from a World Heritage iconic site!"

Helen's fundraising page is still open if any u3a members feel they would like to contribute:

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/helen-wright007



Groups

With the first trial session of Badminton happening recently, we now have 42 active Groups available for members to take part in (as well as our open Coffee and Chat sessions and individual IT advice). Groups' contact lists range in numbers from five people to seventy (with an average of 24).

Art Appreciation 1, Art Appreciation 2, Badminton, Book Group 1, Book Group 2, Bridge -Social/Informal, British Sign Language, Cinema, Creative Writing, Crime Fiction, Current Affairs, Film lovers, French Conversation 1, French Conversation 2, Genealogy, German Conversation, History Book Group, Intermediate French, Italian Conversation, Knitting, Latin, Local History, Longer Walks, Lunch Bunch, Mah-Jong, MOTO, Painting and Drawing, Play Reading, Photography, Poetry Appreciation, Quilting, Recorder Playing, Science & Technology, Spanish Conversation, Sunday Lunch, Table Tennis, Theatre Group, Ventures with a Bus Pass, Visiting Gardens, Walking with a Bus Pass, Wine Appreciation, Yoga

Find out more about them on their pages at the link below:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/glasgow-west-end/groups>

Diary Dates - u3a Summer Festival 18-20 July 2024 in the University of York

Student accommodation at £54 per night or you can look for personal accommodation in nearby Fulford. Daily Rate – Thursday £25, Full day Friday £10, Saturday half day £5 - All-inclusive £35. There can be extra costs for craft activities and sports activities. A courtesy bus will run at peak times from York Railway Station, but also a regular service bus

Accommodation is in the Exhibition Centre with 3 auditoria, set in 200 acres of parkland with 2 lakes and a bird sanctuary. Galleria Dining is close by for catering. It is alongside a sports centre with on-campus parking

(More detailed information will be available later.)

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/festival-2024>

U3a Radio Podcast

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/news/u3a-radio-podcast> The u3a radio podcast, set up in 2020, showcases the amazing things happening across the movement. It's created by a team of u3a members who all have radio experience and features interviews with members, interest group leaders, Trustees, national volunteers and Subject Advisers.

The entire series is available to listen to on our [YouTube channel](#) and since January 2022, has also been available to listen to on podcasting platforms including [Spotify](#) [Google Podcasts](#) & [Apple Podcasts](#)

The team are always looking for more stories: [please get in touch](#) if you'd like to contribute. One member travelled across USA by Greyhound Bus at the age of 21 and repeated the journey at the age of 71. He told us his story. The team welcomes your story. (Tune in on the 17th of each month.)

University of Glasgow Research Project

A study is being conducted to understand the preferences of drivers regarding autonomous vehicles if you are over 60 and have driving experience.

You will take part in a simulated drive using a screen, seat and steering wheel of a driving simulator, simulating Level 3 autonomous cars (the simulator is stationary). While automation is on you will engage in 2 different non-driving related tasks using a phone provided by the experimenter. Several take-over requests (visual-auditory message and vibration) will be issued throughout the drive, you are expected to place hands on the wheel as a sign of taking over control. You will be asked to wear eye-tracking glasses. Next, the experimenter will ask you a few questions regarding the drive. The interview will be recorded anonymously. Following the transcription, the recording will be destroyed. The experiment will be carried out in two sessions and will take about an hour on the first session and 40 minutes on the second session.

Compensation of £12 will be given upon completion of both sessions.

If you are interested, please contact Rawan Zreik Srour at:

rawan.zreiksrour@glasgow.ac.uk