

November 2020



From the chair...



Dear all,

Welcome to our new style bitesize version. You can download this for yourself or maybe for friends not online.

As we continue to move ever further into these weird and unpredictable times we begin to wonder, will we ever meet again?

As it is impossible to predict the future, the Committee has taken the decision to suspend u3a fees until groups are able to physically meet and the monthly meetings can be resumed. Let's hope that considerable progress has been made by June 2nd and that u3a Day will be the start of a new and vibrant chapter.

Opportunities are of the virtual kind right now and the Committee is trying to ensure that everyone is aware of the various initiatives on offer within Wigtownshire u3a as well as the possibility of joint meetings with Stewartry and Dumfries for some groups.

On the subject of meetings, I am sad that I have not had the opportunity to chair a monthly meeting. Of course we may not be able to physically hold next year's AGM at the end of February - because of this some Committee members are undertaking training in running a virtual AGM.

Personally, I will be embarking on a new adventure. My husband retired recently and we have decided it is time to try something new. To this end we have sold our house and will be moving out of Galloway in early next year.

I am only halfway through my term as Chair but, I must resign from this post now and am happy to be handing over to Gill (our current Vice Chair) who will make an admirable and enthusiastic Chair.

Nominations for the vacant Committee posts will be required for the AGM. I hope that some of you will give serious consideration to putting your names forward. We can only hope that near normality will have resumed by next Spring and the new Chair will have the opportunity to communicate directly with members at monthly meetings.

Very best wishes to you all,

Sue Robb

We wish Sue all the best for the future

Zooming marvellous!

Zooming has now become part of our everyday language and will presumably be included very soon in the Oxford English Dictionary!

It was with some trepidation that the Committee agreed to have their meetings via this platform way back in April, but since then we've embraced it and might I say, even enjoyed it. It certainly helped to keep us focused on the agenda items.

Exploring Literature, Beginners French and Friday Philosophy are now also holding their meetings online, and where they might have been full before, Zoom means that increased numbers can take part which is one of the benefits of this method.

Still unsure? There are lots of [tutorials](#) or if you would like some more 1:1 help, please give Gill Hay a call on 07942 047828 or email gilhay22@gmail.com

Photography Group



My photographic journey started as a teenager when I had the opportunity to join a school trip around the Baltic. Having bought a Mamiya SLR 35mm camera with my paper round wages, I spent my time merrily taking photos, unaware that they were rubbish when I look back. However, it certainly whetted my appetite and I decided I wanted to learn more.

I dearly wanted to become a Police photographer and applied to Cheadle Hulme Police Station, successfully passing the entrance exam but was told they were not recruiting at that time and they would 'get in touch'. When I didn't hear anything I started at Stretford Town Hall as a clerk, and continued taking snaps as a hobby.

In 2018 Phil McMenemy, an award-winning photographer, based in Laurieston, came to give a talk to members. Fred Kluit and myself went on a separate day out with Phil at Laurieston and what a day we had! Phil was so enthusiastic, and a brilliant tutor. Fred and I learned such a lot in those few hours and we hope to have another session once this rubbish Covid is out of the way. So while I never got to be a Police Photographer, I can enjoy my hobby in retirement to the full.

(See more on Photography Group page).

Jim Holt

Yoga



Who would have thought that when Jayne Baldwin kindly agreed to take a new yoga class under the u3a banner that four hardy souls amongst the initial 12 who turned up on the first Thursday back in October 2013 would still be there in January 2020? Since then 68 yogis have come (and gone) and all have hopefully enjoyed the experience in one way or another - with the highlight each week, of course, being the fabulous sound of Jayne's calming voice in the relaxation!

All things do come to an end unfortunately and Jayne has brought out her yoga mat to front the class for the last time. We will miss the companionship and good humour of the class (and the coffee afterwards) and many of us are continuing to practise yoga in our own ways.

Namaste

Moyra Breckenridge

Family History enquiry Garlieston

Stewart Gibson from South Africa contacted us to find out more about his ancestors who came from Garlieston, dating back to the early 1800s. He knew that a James Paton was initially involved as a joiner at Galloway House and subsequently ran the Commercial Inn at 1 High Street.

Lynn Bell from The Family History Group came up trumps and Stewart was able to fill in some very vital missing gaps. He said: "Lynn Bell has been fantastic and, through her, we had already picked up on the Queen Arms connection. I even managed to find a picture on an old postcard. She has already sent me some documents confirming James Paton as the proprietor of the Queens Arms as well as details of relevant gravestones/memorials from the local church."



James was born in Kilmaurs, Ayrshire on 20 July 1787, the third son of Hugh "Dreghorn" Paton (1728 – 1800) and his wife, Mary Brown (1746 – 1800). He married Helenora (or Elenora) Wylie in Stewarton, Ayrshire on 9 November 1810. James was a joiner and around 1812, he, with his wife and probably young baby Hugh, moved to Garlieston in the parish of Sorbie to work at Galloway House. Building began on the House in 1740 for Lord Garlies, later to become the sixth Earl of Galloway.

In the 1841 census, the Paton family, consisting of five boys and six girls, was recorded as staying in the "Sheds" at Galloway House with two of the sons, Hugh and James, being joiner journeymen, and another two, John and George, being joiner apprentices. Their mother, Helenora, died on 25 May 1850 and the place of death is given as the Commercial Inn, Garlieston.

In 1851 the family was recorded as staying in High Row, Garlieston and James was a joiner employing five men, probably his three sons, Hugh, James and Robert, as well as two non-family members as apprentices. It is not clear whether this was all work at Galloway House or if he had expanded to general work.

(See more on the Family History Group page).

Compiled by: **Stewart Gibson**, great-great-great grandson of James Paton.

We were also contacted by a descendant of the Wylie family who was on holiday researching her family from the local area and were able to help them too.

Lesley Miller

Practical Gardening Group



When lockdown rules were relaxed in the summer, a few members of the Practical Gardening group took advantage of Scotland's Garden Scheme, to visit Fernlea Garden in Newton Stewart, and Barholm Castle Gardens near Carluith. It was lovely to see some fellow members again, however briefly, and at a safe distance.

Fernlea was begun in 2006, and was formerly part of a neighbouring garden. There are colourful borders at the front and on one side of the house, designed to provide variety through the summer and autumn. Fruit trees are trained along the long south facing wall of the house,

with more fruit trees and bushes growing in the secret garden behind the house. A small Chinese garden was inspired by the owner's two visits to China.

Barholm Castle Gardens were also begun in 2006, following the restoration of the castle. The gardens are very large, and are divided into several different sections, with those at the front, including a walled garden, affording a wonderful view over Wigtown Bay. There is a spectacular gate designed and built by a local blacksmith. Behind the castle there is a ravine with a pond, ferns, shrubs and a fake crocodile, which has apparently scared some visitors! In February the ravine is full of snowdrops and there is also an area of woodland extending up the hill, where a new path has been built.

(See more on Practical Gardening Club page),

Jane Edwards

Bringing the past back to life

Moyra Breckenridge and Lesley Miller signed up for a Shared Learning Project between the u3a and The Guardian and Observer newspapers archive in October. For the past couple of months, the pair have been deciphering digitised old shorthand notes made by Clyde Sanger, the Guardian's first Africa Correspondent for historians and researchers. Sanger's notes are written in a mixture of longhand and Pitman's New Era shorthand, and the project needed volunteers able to read the shorthand and try transcribing it from the digital scans.



Due to the Covid situation, Moyra and Lesley couldn't meet but compared their transcriptions of a 24 page notebook about Kenya and Tanganyika on the telephone together and thoroughly enjoyed it. "It certainly gets the old grey matter working and although a few of the outlines evaded us, we managed to get most of it back." Moyra said. Both of them studied Pitman some 50 years ago so they're both feeling quite chuffed at having retained the skill and gluttons for punishment, have volunteered to do some more!

More about Clive Sanger [here](#):

Moyra Breckenridge and Lesley Miller

Facebook



The closed (private) Wigtownshire u3a Facebook group started in January this year and now has 48 members. Specifically aimed at members, the aim was to share information and ideas and promote discussion. Why not give it a go? Just apply to join, answer a few simple questions and you're away.

New branding



In September, the national u3a held its Annual General Meeting at which they approved the [new branding](#) which is now featured on their website and will gradually filter down through all publicity items. The branding was reached after months of intensive research and testing of alternative logos amongst existing and potential members to have a more modern, upbeat look and feel. The aim is to attract more members to see what the u3a movement has to offer. You will notice if you look at the national website <https://www.u3a.org.uk/> there are fewer tabs, and an uncluttered display, making it easier to find your way around.

Meanwhile, our webmaster Julie McGlashan has been hard at work on our own website, as we're in the process of transferring over to the national Site Builder option. This will reflect the new branding eventually, making us stand out more effectively as an organisation which makes a positive difference to the local community.

Later this year we'll be seeing new publicity leaflets and materials all ready in time for the June 2nd u3a Day.

Stuck for something to do in lockdown?

Although there is still restricted access to Wigtown library, (and you may have had your fill of gardening!) – you'll find a wealth of free learning resources, quizzes, and fun challenges on the national website, [here](#) which are regularly refreshed. You'll also find lots of ideas are contributed on the National u3a – Keeping in Touch Facebook page which you can join.

We want to support you as much as we can, so please stay in touch and keep safe and we wish you all the very best for the coming festive season.