

# Inverness and Black Isle u3a Newsletter

*July 2025*



*Welcome to the  
July Newsletter*



## Learn, laugh, live

### History of IBI u3a

This is the second in a series that celebrates the history and achievements of Inverness and Black Isle u3a as we look forward to our silver anniversary next year. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the meticulous record-keeping of our dedicated committee members, especially Margaret Ferguson. Thanks to their efforts, we can trace our group's evolution from its very first day right up to the present.

### Interest Groups

When we first started, our pioneering Interest Groups were Philosophy and IT. These quickly gained momentum, and soon after, Current Affairs joined the lineup, proving so popular that by autumn 2002 it had branched into two separate groups: one in Inverness and another on the Black Isle.

In those early days, our groups were primarily led by experts, teachers, and academics. But it wasn't long before enthusiasts stepped up, keen to share their interests. By 2002, our list of groups included:

- **Languages** – led by *Sheena Munro*
- **Computers** – *Sheena Matheson*
- **Current Affairs Inverness** – *Roger Fairclough*
- **Current Affairs Black Isle** – *Calum Buchanan*
- **Philosophy** – *Margaret Ferguson*
- **Book Group** – *Lonna Davidson*
- **Writers' Group** – *Rhoda Dunbar*

And the growth didn't stop there! In 2003, we welcomed **Music Appreciation** (*Margo Cruft*) and **Archaeology** (*Eleanor Fairclough*) into our expanding family of interests.

### Spreading the Word in a Pre-Digital Age

Imagine a time before websites or the buzz of social media! Back then, all our publicity relied on the power of word of mouth, eye-catching posters, and the occasional feature in the local press. It's a testament to the community spirit and genuine interest that our u3a flourished even without today's digital tools.

### Your Memories

If you have any anecdotes from the early years of our group and/or photos, we would love to hear from you!

## July General Meeting

### **The Picts: Unveiling Our Ancient Local History** **July 14th at 2pm in Fortrose Old Town Hall**

Who were the Picts? How did they live? What do we know about their lives here in Inverness and the Black Isle?

This illustrated talk, given by u3a member Alastair Morton, will explore their identity, way of life and the evidence discovered across our local landscape, highlighting the key sites of Burghead, Tarradale, and Rosemarkie.

**On 28th July, as a follow up to this talk, there will be a self-drive outing to local sites, where Alastair will be our guide. Further details will be available at the talk.**

The next outing started from Daviot with six members doing a circuit of the lochs above Inverness, Loch a Chlachain, Loch Duntelchaig, Loch Ashie and Loch Ruthven. A total of 28 miles.

Our third trip started from the Black Bridge near Kilmorack with four members cycling down Glen Strathglass to Cannich. Here we stopped for refreshments in the local cafe before returning back along the other side of the River Glass via Eskadale and through the Eilean Aigas estate to the start. A total of 32 .

## Cycling Group



This year the U3A Cycle Group have had three outings to date.

The first started from the UHI Campus with four members following various forest trails to Tornagrain where coffee and cake was enjoyed in the local cafe. We then continued on to Kilravock castle and then past Dalcross castle before returning back to the start. A total of 24 miles on a sunny day.



## Books Books Books

The u3a book swap stall will be making an appearance at the General Meeting on Monday 23rd August. Don't forget to bring along any books that you wish to donate, and have a browse of any that you might wish to take away. Free to all



## Get Ready for the u3a Jamboree!

### A Scottish Celebration of Learning & Fun

Join us in Edinburgh on Friday, 29th August 2025

Mark your calendars for the all-Scotland u3a Jamboree at Edinburgh Napier University's beautiful Craiglockhart Campus. This is your chance to dive into the vibrant world of u3a activities from across the country.

#### What's the Jamboree All About?

- **Connect:** Meet fellow u3a members, catch up with old friends, and make new ones.
- **Discover:** Try your hand at exciting new activities or enjoy familiar favourites.
- **Enjoy:** Most importantly, have a fantastic time celebrating the spirit of u3a!

#### Our Venue: Craiglockhart Campus

Nestled in a green oasis within the city, [the Craiglockhart Campus offers:](#)

•

**Versatile Spaces:** Various indoor rooms, including the main Rivers Suite hub.

• **Outdoor Opportunities:** Plenty of green space perfect for activities, plus immediate access to Craiglockhart Hills and Nature Reserve for walks and exploration.

• **Great Facilities:** Flexible meeting rooms with excellent AV/IT (for 25-100 people), a campus café, a coffee bar for mingling, and the nearby Craiglockhart Leisure Centre for sports.

• **Historical Interest:** The campus houses the Scottish War Poets Collection, recalling its time as a WWI hospital for poets like Sassoon and Owen.

#### Help Us Build the Programme!

What activities could your u3a offer? Think about taster sessions to let members explore something new! Let us know your ideas and requirements for space and facilities.

We already have about 15 activities. We need at least the same again. We'll be adapting the schedule right up to the last moment, but if you have an idea, even if it isn't fully formed – GET IN TOUCH at [u3ajamboree@gmail.com!](mailto:u3ajamboree@gmail.com)

More information at [https://scotland.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_events/jamboree-a-scottish-celebration-of-learning-fun/](https://scotland.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/jamboree-a-scottish-celebration-of-learning-fun/)

## Travel Group



A successful first 'Travel Group' day trip to the spectacular Corrieshalloch Gorge and Ullapool, took place on Tuesday 27th May. The sun shone at the right times and a couple of showers did nothing to lessen the enjoyment for all. Next up is a trip to attend the 'Tall Ships Race' coupled with a Red Arrows display in Aberdeen on July 21st and is already proving popular with group members.

A trip to the 'Red Herring' exhibition at Timespan Museum in Helmsdale is lining up for 29th August. This explores the stories of the herring girls supported by photographic exhibits by Joanne Coates.

Red Herring brings to light the stories of the Herring Girls, also known as Gutting Girls or Herring Lassies. They travelled seasonally to coastal towns gutting and packing fish. Underpaid, injured, and working in harsh conditions, these women formed complex communities that carved out independence in a male dominated space'. (from Timespan.org.uk)

The Members are already planning to take in the 'Enchanted Forest' event at Pitlochry in October.

The next scheduled meeting for the Travel group is set for Tuesday 12th August at 10.30, at the North Kessock Community Hub.

## Pickleball

The pickleball group continues to grow and attract new members to the u3a. To give members more opportunities to play we are aiming to increase the meetings to twice a month, ideally using different venues and days of the week.

With this in mind, we held our first meeting at Inverness Leisure Centre in June. We hope to be able to use courts at **Inverness Leisure Centre** as much as possible and will aim for **first Thursday of the month in the morning**. Due to other activities taking place at the Centre this may not always be possible so anyone interested in joining one of the sessions should get in touch through the u3a website and we can tell you when and where the next session will be held.

Our next meeting in **Inverness Leisure Centre will be on Thursday 3rd July at 9:30am**. We have plenty of court time to allow for both new and more experienced players.

We have also secured the courts at **Black Isle Leisure Centre** for our regular slot of **third Friday of the month in the afternoon**. Our July session at Black Isle will be **Friday 18th July at 3pm**.

If you are interested in giving it a go, all you need are shoes suitable for use in an indoor sports hall, clothing that allows freedom of movement, and a water bottle to keep hydrated. We charge £2 per person towards replacement balls and additional court fees.

## Walking Group

Geoff led our first walk at Boat of Garten on 30th April along the River Spey to Kinchurdy and up to Loch Dallas for lunch.



Lunch break. (*Interesting fact :: timber from the Caledonian forests of Abernethy were cut locally into railway sleepers for use on the railways being built in England upto 1800. As the roads were poor all timber sleepers had to go by sea . So the sleepers were formed into rafts and floated down to Garmouth on this coast.*)

Our 2nd walk on 14th May was at Tonagrain and Mary led us through a woodland to the East of Tornagrain then up towards Croy cutting over to the original Tornagrain village and returning through the new village. (*Interesting fact: The new village at Tornagrain is being promoted by Moray Estates who were one one of the original promoters of Edinburgh New Town*)

Sarah led our 3rd walk on 28th May through Brahan Estate ,with the Rhododendrons and Azaleas in full bloom, and round Dunglass Island. We were joined by Canadian visitors Gladys and Darrel.(see below)



On 11th June Pauline and Martin led our walk from Drumnadrochit to Divach Falls via an alternative route via the Great Glen Way out of Drum and returning back by Craigmonie , see photo below, which is one of 70+ Vitrified Forts scattered throughout Scotland. (*Craig Phadrig and Ord Hill overlooking Inverness and Knock Farrel overlooking Strathpeffer are the most notable Vitrified Forts in the area.*)



Evelyn is going to lead our 5th walk on 25th June at Slochd walking over to Sluggans Bridge and the Archers Stone ,a memorial to Little John MacAndrew.

Our programme of future walks is noted below:

9th July.....Muir of Ord area. Leader.....Eileen  
23rd July.....Loch Killin. Leader.....Avril  
6th August.....Fyrish. Leaders...Lorna & Alan

3rd September....TBA  
17th September..Beinn Bhuidhe Mhor above Culloden...Leader ...Rosie.

Please come and join our Group for a walk which will give you some gentle exercise in the open (*can't promise it will be dry*), enjoy the convivial company of the group and you may learn about Local history, folklore, fauna and flora (*Did you know that Abernethy forest is one of the few places in UK where you can find *Linnaea borealis**). Perhaps in discussion with some of our members you may pick up a tip of where to go and what to do on your next holiday (*My apologies to the travel group*)

# Drawing and Watercolour Group Group

**The group will run from September 2025 – May 2026**

**Aim** – The aim of this group is to draw and paint for pleasure, free from pressure or expectation. We can if we wish set our own personal challenges or goals while still enjoying the company of others within the group. This group has no tutor, it is a “self-help” group, but we learning from each other and exchange tips and advice.

**Materials** – If you have any drawing or watercolour materials, please bring them with you.

**(Please note – Acrylic paint, bottles of ink, or any medium that could permanently stain a carpet are NOT allowed.)**

**Beginners** - If you are a beginner or have done little or no art since school, please do not be put off. We are more than happy to lend equipment and/or offer advice just to get you started.

**Venue** -We meet in the Culloden/Balloch Baptist Church which is a new modern church with free, easy and ample parking right outside the door. Both the car park and the church are all on the level so very easy access. The church is always warm and has loads of natural light and is in every way a great venue.

**Buses** - There is a good bus service to near the Culloden/Balloch church. Please ask if you would like more detailed advice regarding



If you would like to be added to the mailing list for the Drawing & Watercolour group or would like further information, please contact Ali McLaren via the “CONTACTS” link on the website

**.....and finally**

Thank you again for all your contributions and especially for all the photos. My apologies for any mistakes or omissions which are entirely accidental. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome Please let me have your contributions for next month’s newsletter by 24thJuly. Please send everything to [ibiu3newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ibiu3newsletter@gmail.com)

The September meeting is on Tuesday 12th September 2-4 at Culloden/Balloch Church meeting room.