

Inverness and Black Isle u3a Newsletter

August 2025

Welcome



[To the August Newsletter](#)

Coffee and Craic

On 18th July six of us met at O'Delice French Patisserie in Inverness. This gave us an opportunity to sample the delicious French pastries baked on the premises by Emilie, the proprietor. In a very relaxed atmosphere we shared banter, as well as our thoughts on a lot of different subjects.

If you like a treat, it's a great place to visit, right in the heart of Inverness.

The next meeting of the Coffee and Craic Group will be at the Palace Hotel on



Wednesday 17th September at 11:00 am

U3a Mindfulness For Living

Are you interested in joining the next group of people on a U3a Mindfulness course which will start in September 2025?

Mindfulness is at the heart of the ancient practice of meditation. It could be seen as a life skill which can help us feel better about ourselves and the world around us. It's about paying attention in a special way. We pay attention to what is happening in the present moment just accepting what's there without judgement.

Our u3a course is based on the well-researched evidence-based 8 week Mindfulness Based Living Course (MBLC). We also explore the usefulness of Mindfulness in relation to ageing and the ageing process.

The course is not a therapy group, is secular and open to everyone. Each group is kept small and can be run weekly or fortnightly. The course can be face to face or online on Zoom depending on the wishes of group members.

A taster session will be held on Tuesday 19th August at 2pm.

It will be held online on Zoom and last around an hour. This will be an opportunity to ask questions, get an idea of what the course will be like and find out if it is for you.

If you send me an email address, I will send you an invitation to this taster session a day or so before the event.



Pickleball

Thanks to a donation from Scotmid we have been able to purchase equipment for the group. we now have 12 paddles, a stock of indoor balls and 4 ball retrievers. The paddles have a slightly rough surface making it easier for the 'spin kings' to get maximum spin on the balls.

We put the new equipment to the test on 18th July at Black Isle Leisure Centre where we had 12 players on court including 3 new players.

Due to the school holidays our next meeting at Inverness Leisure will be on Friday 1st August , 15.30 to 17.30. As this is a late finish we won't be able to have our usual cuppa afterwards.

The next Black Isle Leisure Centre meeting will be on Friday 15th August, 15.00 to 16.30. This will be followed by a visit to a local cafe for a laugh and a drink.

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.



Travel Group



On Monday 21st July, 10 members of the u3a Travel Group visited the Tall Ships event in Aberdeen, the first time such an event had been held in Aberdeen for over 20 years.

50 ships of various sizes and construction were on display and sporting colourful flags from around the globe. In addition to the ships, there were many food stalls, bars, a craft market, live music and many exciting children's activities, as well as folk dressed up in pirates and seafaring outfits. The whole place was buzzing, and if that wasn't enough, a magnificent Red Arrows flying display took place on the Esplanade in the late afternoon.

The Group were fortunate to have superb weather, and travel plans went off without a hitch despite the enormous crowds attending (estimated to be in excess of 400,000)

It was generally agreed that it was a most pleasurable and exciting day for everyone.

The next travel event is in August for a trip to Helmsdale to take in the "Herring Girls" exhibition at the Timespan Museum

Gardening group



In the first week of July four of the Garden Group had an enlightening and eye-opening visit to Seeds of Scotland, a seed company located near Evanton, with fields overlooking the beautiful Cromarty Firth.

Finlay (one half of this innovative, newly established enterprise, Haley being the other hardworking half) gave us a marvellous, personal insight into the varied aspects their unique company. We were shown their huge polytunnels and outside growing spaces and the all-important seed processing and packing areas which take place in an old grain drying loft near the fields. Their office is a converted upper floor of a barn.

The farm, established in March 2023 consists of two parcels of land with a total area of around 1 hectare, and following a period of conversion with the Soil Association the land became organically certified in January 2025. The farm grows vegetables, flowers and grains.

Finlay and Haley have a particular interest in growing Scottish heritage varieties as well as varieties that will grow well in the Scottish climate. The historical and cultural significance of each seed sown, and the stories they tell, is of great importance.

If you are heading to Dundee's V&A they are part of "Garden Futures: Designing with Nature" exhibition – on until January 2026 www.vam.ac.uk/dundee/whatson/exhibitions/garden-futures-designing-with-nature

We also visited Aldourie Castle in June where we were given an fascinating talk by Gordon on how they have developed this lovely garden in recent years. Those of us who saw it a few years ago could hardly believe the difference. We were amazed by the walled garden which is only eight years old but looks like it's been there since the castle was built.

Our next day out will be to Incredible Edible Inverness and we're always on the lookout for suggestions and help in organising future visits. Contact Maryquemby@gmail.com.



.....and finally

Thank you again for all your input. Please let me have your contributions for next month's newsletter by 24th August along with photos as long as the members are in agreement. Please send everything to ibiu3newsletter@gmail.com

.....and have a great summer