

Inverness and Black Isle u3a Newsletter

December 2025

Welcome



To the December Newsletter



Our Silver Jubilee

SAVE THE DATE!

We will be celebrating 25 years of the u3a in
Inverness & Black Isle on

15th October 2026

More information to follow, but please put the
date in your diaries now!



A word from our Convener

December General Meeting

This will be on Thursday 4th December in a new venue, **ST NINIAN'S CHURCH HALL, 21 CULDUTHEL ROAD, INVERNESS IV2**. Tea and coffee will be available as usual after the talk, however, as we have to buy the refreshments in, we will be asking for cash donations towards the cost.

Steve Barron Managing Director of Highland News and Media will talk on 'Future proofing local news'. At 11am.

Writing Workshop

A very successful workshop on writing dialogue was held on 17th November. Led by Vee Walker we attempted several writing exercises including rewriting a scene from Pride and Prejudice in different time periods, from the Elizabethan to a present day school disco. It is hoped that our writing group will be able to devise a programme of meetings which will include further occasional



Other New Groups

The committee are always happy to consider possible new groups. Recent suggestions include Board Games and several music groups, one for music appreciation one for players and a choir. Pauline Graham, who set up our very successful Pickleball Group is joining the committee to support new groups

Working Groups

We now have groups which will be planning our General Meetings for 26-27 and our 25th Birthday Party. Both of them could do with a few more members, to volunteer please contact me. ibiconvener@gmail.com



Social Events

It would be good if we could set up a working group to organise a few purely social events for our members, in future it would be good to have at least a Christmas event and a summer party. Any offers to help with the organisation?

u3a groups are supposed to be run by ourselves for ourselves. However, at the moment I estimate that only just over a quarter of our members do anything to help with our organisation. Whilst some members are unable to help or having a well earned rest from years of hard work for u3a we do have too many members who are happy to sit back and not contribute. If this is you do please think what you could do to help.

One of my New Year resolutions is to ensure that Inverness and Black Isle u3a ends 2026 with at least 50% of members involved in its organisation and more interest groups, It only remains to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

We start 2026 with a General Meeting in Inverness Town House 9th January - Highland Retreats: The Architecture and Interiors of Scotland's Romantic North at 11am.

Mary Miers, architectural historian, writer, and the Fine Arts and Books Editor at Country Life magazine, tells the story of how Scotland's most remarkable and

Car Share Scheme for General Meetings



The committee is putting together a list of people who are willing to pick up members and take them to General Meetings.

Volunteer drivers: If you drive to the meetings and are able to offer a lift to other members living in your neck of the woods, please contact ibu3awebsite@gmail.com stating from which areas you are able to offer transport.

Once we have a list of drivers, we will invite members to let us know if they would like a lift.



Spotlight on Science!

The science group is for anyone who is interested in exploring any aspect of the subject; we usually have one main topic for each meeting, but we start the meeting by looking at items of science news that group members have come across.

Previous topics we have looked at include:
Artificial Intelligence

- Are we partly Neanderthal?
- Radio Frequency ID tags
- Fractals and the Mandelbrot set
- Engineering aircraft for fuel efficiency and environmental sustainability
- The harmonic series and its importance for science and technology generally

No specialist knowledge is required of members, only a curiosity about all things scientific! If you would like to join us, contact Dave via the [Science Group's webpage](#).

Our Facebook page

Facebook is one of the many ways we communicate with members, but it's also a way of raising awareness of Inverness and Black Isle u3a and recruiting new members. If you have a Facebook account, please follow our [page](#), and like and share our posts!



Summer School

24th to 27th August 2026

The Hawkhills, Easingwold, YO61 3EG

The aims of our Summer School

Provide members with new learning opportunities

Enable members to explore a topic their local u3a may not be able to offer

Enable delegates to share time out with other members from across the region and beyond

In 2025 we had delegates from ten of the twelve u3a regions and nations, with feedback such as

"An excellent summer school, as always!" "A wonderful venue – we were so well looked after."

"The courses, food, and company were all first-class"

The Hawkhills is again the venue for our 2026 Summer School

You can read about this superb venue here <https://thehawkhills.com/>

The courses to choose from

Britain through Literature, Art, Poetry and Speeches of the 1960s	Conversational Spanish
Crime Fiction from Sherlock to Vera	The Changing English Language
Drama - Intermediate Improvised Drama	Making Sense of Everyday Mathematics
Fungi and Lichens	Outdoor Painting and Sketching
An Introduction to Practical Geology	Stained Glass in English Churches Art, Science and Symbolism

Costs for our three-night residential Summer School:

Full Board Delegate £495pp

Day Delegate £256pp (inclusive of lunches and dinners)

For more information, including course details and the booking form, go to

<https://yahru3a.uk/summer-school/>

We look forward to seeing you

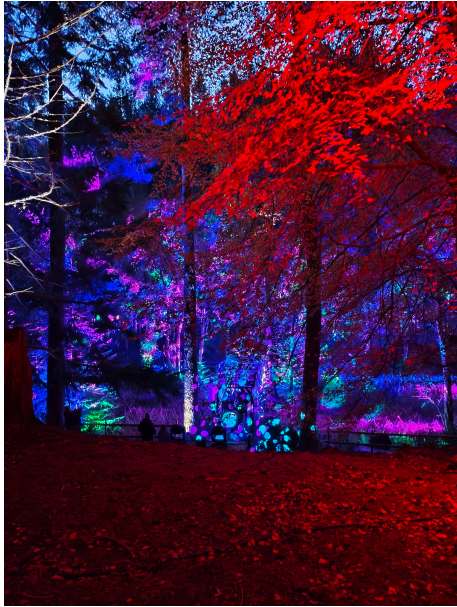


Have you ever thought of attending a U3A Summer School?

Each year the U3A across the UK run a series of Summer Schools, these are mainly residential, are an opportunity to meet lots of lovely new u3a folk and offer interesting and varied topics for study over a 3 to 4 day period.

The Scottish u3a run a summer school biennially and 2026 will be their year. This summer school is held in Stirling at the University campus, and again can be residential, although for those folk living close by, there is the option to opt to be a day delegate. Their programme has not been posted yet.

The attached poster is for the Yorkshire and Humber u3a region 2026 summer school, and is an early look at what summer schools have to offer. Keep a look out in the Third Age Matters magazine for notification of other Summer Schools being run next year. U3a members from any region can attend any of the Summer Schools. If anyone would like to know more about these activities, contact Avril Mountford at ibisecretary@gmail.com Avril has attended a number of the Schools and is looking forward to next year's programme of socialising and learning – **“learn, laugh, live!”**



Upcoming trips

Edinburgh Christmas markets (day trip) | 11th OR 17th December

Next travel group meeting

Tuesday 3rd February 2025

Have you often felt - Oh I would like to go to that? or "i'd love to go there" but ... Well, there's no one to go with, or you just lose the idea?

Now it doesn't have to be that way! You can join up with the U3A Travel group who joyfully go to all sorts of places, with whoever can go, whenever we want to.

Our most recent trip was to Dundee for 2 days to visit the V&A and several other venues, plus a great meal out at the Ship Inn, Broughty Ferry. All educational, informative, and very entertaining.

To join us, please send your contact details either to the convenor, or Avril (or me) . You will need to be able to communicate with the group on WhatsApp, and to make and pay for your own travel arrangements (though if you do not have the skill someone will help).

We also hold meetings at the north Kessock ferry ticket office hub.

Pitlochry Enchanted Forest Event

12 of the Travel group members had a most enjoyable day on Monday 27th October at the Pitlochry Enchanted Forest event. Initially, travelling independently to Pitlochry, thereafter, all meeting up at Café Calluna, Pitlochry at around 13.00 for coffee and scones, then onto McKays for a pre-booked lunch. Thereafter the buses took us all from Fishers Hotel to Faskally Forest where the light, sound and smoke show was held. The show exceeded everyone's expectations, the weather was good (not a drop of rain), there was mulled wine and food available for purchase and the organisation was exceptional. Not everybody managed to stay together during the visit, and folk caught transport back to Inverness at times to suit their own circumstances.



Secret Bunker visit

- Overview: A behind the scenes tour of wartime engineering, civil defence operations and lesser-known mechanisms.
- Who designed restrictors in Rolls Royce Merlin engines that allow for negative-g manoeuvres – Tilly Shilling, great girl.
- What the enemy death ray machine really was (no spoiler)
- Why BSA sten guns were the weapon of choice.
- When civvies plotted incoming enemy planes on maps in the filter room.
- When baking soda is applied internally after internal injuries.

A very informative and interesting visit by all 10 U3A Members on 10th November 2025



Pickleball

Our Pickleball group continues to thrive, and numbers are steadily increasing — so much so that we regularly have a waiting list for sessions. To avoid disappointment, please remember to book early.

I am currently considering setting up a new “**Gentle Pickleball**” group aimed at those who are new to the game, unsure about their fitness levels, or feel that the usual coaching and game-play sessions might be a bit too much at first. This would be a slower-paced, confidence-building session, with fun games based around Pickleball and will run alongside ‘Pickleball Taster’ sessions for new players. These session will be ideal for anyone wanting to give Pickleball a try in a supportive and relaxed environment. I need to know if there will be enough demand for this so if you would be interested in joining such a session, please let me know via the link on Pickleball Group page https://inverness-and-black-isle.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/pickleball/— I would love to hear from you.

Our existing programme will continue as usual, with split sessions at Inverness Leisure (one hour of coaching followed by game play) and games-only sessions at the Black Isle Leisure Centre.

Thank you to everyone for your enthusiasm and support as the group continues to grow.



Gardening Group



We had a very enjoyable (and muddy) visit to Burgie Arboretum in November and enjoyed wandering along the paths to see the great selection of trees. We plan to revisit next year to see it in its summer glory. We followed this up with lunch at Brodie and an agreement to get together soon to plan next year's agenda.

The next planned event will be a Gardener's Question Time in the new year.



.....and almost finally

Thank you again for all your contributions. Please let me have your contributions for next month's newsletter by 26th December. . Please send everything to ibiu3newsletter@gmail.com



Of course, the final word is to wish you all

A very Merry

Christmas

