

Inverness and Black Isle u3a Newsletter

July 2026

*Welcome to the
July newsletter*



*Are you
getting ready
to party on
October 15th?*

*Look out for
your invitation
coming soon.*

A Word from our Convener

General Meeting

Our next General Meeting is on Friday 3rd July at 10.30am in Inverness Town House when Murdo MacIver will talk about Inverness Mens Shed. As usual we will follow the talk with refreshments.

Trips

We are hoping to organise two outings this summer. One to Forsinard to see the Flow Country following our talk earlier in the year and another to visit the Arctic Convoy museum. If you are interested in joining either or both of these and have not signed up yet then do let me know
ibiconvener@gmail.com

**Our next year will begin on Monday
September 7th.**

Our General Meeting that day will focus our interest groups. As well as finding out more about our existing groups there will also be a chance to suggest new groups that you would like to see.

Best wishes for a wonderful summer whatever your plans are.

Coffee and Craic

An invitation to all coffee lovers



The Coffee and Craic Group will be celebrating International Coffee Day on Wednesday 16th September 2026. The official date of International Coffee Day is 1st October and its purpose is to bring coffee lovers together to honour coffee growers across the world, fair trade practices and the collaboration involved in the coffee production process.

If you love the tantalising aroma and delectable taste of freshly brewed coffee, this event may be for you. The only requirements for attending are that you are a passionate coffee lover and that you either wear or carry something that represents the colour of coffee in some way. Actually the second one is entirely optional! There will also be an opportunity to test your knowledge about different kinds of coffee in a light-hearted way.

Unfortunately, due to space constraints, it's not possible to meet in the best coffee roasting venues in the city. Our meeting will take place at the Palace Hotel, Ness Bank, Inverness at 11:00 am on Wednesday 16th September and is open to all members of this u3a. Numbers will be limited and it's important to book in advance.

If you would like to attend, please contact sheenataylor@protonmail.com

The Strollers (new group)



Our second stroll on Tuesday 16th June was another successful outing. Eleven walkers gathered at Merkinch turning circle for 2.5 miles walk along the sea wall, up to the canal towpath and down to Clachnaharry point where we paused for a drink and to watch the boats going through the locks. We returned via the board walk through Merkinch Local Nature Reserve and the wonderful wildflower bed.

Details of the next stroll still need to be worked out but we now have a volunteer Group Leader. Ideally, we would like a second group leader to assist.

We are also looking for ideas for walks and volunteer walk leaders. Please send ideas and offers to volunteer to ibiu3agroups@gmail.com

Cycle Group

The Cycle Group started up again this year with two rides in April.

The first started from the Inverness Leisure Centre with a 23 mile route around Loch Duntelchaig and Loch Ashie.

Refreshments were enjoyed in the Botanic Gardens cafe after the ride.

Our second outing started from North Kessock and took in Munlochy, Culbokie and the Redcastle picnic site where we stopped for lunch. We then cycled back to North Kessock where we enjoyed refreshments in the North Kessock hotel - a total of 25 miles.

The following photo is our lunch break at the Redcastle picnic site.

In May we had a further two rides. The first was from the Black Bridge to Cannich and back down the other side of the river through Eskadale - a total of 31 miles.

Our next ride started in Nairn and was a circular route via Drynachan with a diversion to Dulsie Bridge - a total of 32 miles. Refreshments were taken in the caravan site cafe back in Nairn.



In June we started from Muir of Ord and passed through Marybank and Contin with a snack break at Loch Achilty (above) and then onto the Loch Luichart dam. Here we stopped for lunch. We then continued via the Loch Meig dam into Strathconon with a diversion through the Fairburn Estate to take us back to Muir of Ord - a total of 30 miles.

Coffee/tea and cake were enjoyed in The Singleton of Glen Ord Distillery.

Travel Group



Eight members of the travel group had a most exciting day out in May on the Waverley paddle steamer. We were picked up at 07.00 in Inverness and taken to Kyle of Lochalsh where we boarded the paddle steamer. We then set off to circumnavigate the entire coastline of the Isle of Skye, rounding Skye's northern headland in a force 7 which made for an interesting experience.

The trip offered views of the island which one never gets to see on the mainland, we saw the outer Hebridean isles, the small isles, the isles of Coll and Mull, in addition to numerous remote skerries, all of which have a name.

The inner workings of the paddle steamer are on view and are a sight to behold; the weather was kind to us, dry and just a little breezy and we all arrived back in Inverness at midnight, having spent a day that will stay with us for years to come.



After several months in the pipeline and given operational demands, we were not holding our breaths that a visit to RAF Lossiemouth would "take off"! However, it did for an ecstatic bunch of Travel Group enthusiasts. The sun shone to 26C, the warmest day of the year so far. All systems go for what transpired to be a visit that exceeded all expectations. Our host was a Flt Lt who escorted us for the entire five hours. First was 2 Squadron Typhoons, recently returned to base from overseas. Their host arranged for us to don high visibility vests and ear defenders and stand on the apron as two Typhoons taxied out and took off, truly awe inspiring. A visit to the Squadron's history display (oldest Sqn in RAF) was followed by a presentation and Q and A session. Then to the pilots' locker room to have a "tour" round their flying suits and helmets, quite extraordinary. Then a visit to a hangared Typhoon where one could walk around and climb up to look in the cockpit. The questions were coming fast from our group and as ever our host were fulsome in their answers. Ninety minutes of pure excitement and a group photo.

By minibus we moved on to the Heritage Centre, which was a veritable Alladin's Cave of military aviation memorabilia down the years. A ninety-minute talk was provided by a hugely knowledgeable staff member. Absolutely fascinating. We then were taken on a window tour of the base in the minibus, before having a photo taken beside a static Tornado with 11 Operational Theatres listed on its tail from 1991 to 2018.



This truly was an exceptional day. A letter of thanks written by the organiser, was sent to the Station Commander and here is our unanimous feedback.

"I think as civilians we can forget just how reliant we are on our military services to keep us safe. I know all twelve of us will be singing the praises far and wide of your personnel, who made the visit a truly unforgettable experience. They filled us with pride for sure and with heartfelt appreciation for taking time to show us a little of their dedication and professionalism that makes the RAF the pride of the nation.

Gardening Group



In June, the group enjoyed an excellent sunny afternoon at Aldourie Castle Garden. This garden, although mostly quite new, looks like it has been there for well over a hundred years and has an amazing array of plants and trees. We were shown around by the very knowledgeable Elliot who shared lots of great gardening tips with us. We finished the day with tea and biscuits in the garden which was appreciated by all.

Science Group



Normally the Science Group meets on the third Thursday of each month, but emphasis is on the word "normally".

For July and August this would suggest the following dates 16th July and 20th August, but with alternative dates a week later on 23rd July or 27th August.

We discuss the dates at each session, and try to have days and times which suit most members.

As yet we have not decided a clear strategy for July and August.

We might decide to take a break until September – but this is not ideal.

When the dates for July and August are decided or a decision to skip one or both sessions is made, an update will be posted on the u3a Facebook page.

The group has been using AI tools interactively over the last few months, and will continue to do so. We are able to use tools "live" in each session, and look for information and also use AI in ways which are considerably more powerful than a simple dictionary style look up with a typical search engine.

.....and finally

Thank you again for all your emails. My apologies for any mistakes or omissions.. Your comments and suggestions are very welcome Please let me have your contributions for next month's newsletter by 24th July. Please send everything to ibiu3anewsletter@gmail.com