

# BANCHORY AND DEESIDE U3A

## NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2025

Our glorious autumn has arrived early, mainly due to the very dry and beautiful summer; the North-East had 500 hours of sunshine, more than anywhere else in Scotland. We hope all our members have been able to enjoy it, even to sitting out in the evening, a rare treat in the past few years!

### **Message from our Chair**

Here we are in October already with our U3A activities once again in full swing after the summer lull. Some groups did continue to meet over the summer but most decided either to take a couple of months break or sometimes just to meet up for coffee and chat. It's up to each group what pattern to follow for their meetings: most meet monthly but others meet more frequently. It's for members of each group to decide.

Do remember that if there is a subject that you would like to see added to our list of groups, the possibility can be explored. If you contact our Groups' Coordinator Anna MacKay, she or another member of the Committee will send out an email to all members to gauge interest. A meeting of these people can then be arranged and they can decide if they wish to go ahead with the idea. A number of possibilities including Photography are being explored at present. As u3a runs on the principle that it is a self-help learning organisation in which members give of their knowledge and skills and learn from those of others, any new group depends on one or two people agreeing to coordinate it and on the other group members to contribute as and when they can.

We recently had another successful trip to Pitlochry where a number of members enjoyed a performance of 'The Thirty Nine Steps'. This was loosely based on John Buchan's novel of the same name but was more farce than thriller. The audience was certainly much amused. Thanks are due to our Membership Secretary June Wilson for her efficient organisation of the day. Is a trip to Pitlochry turning into an annual event? It would be good if it did.

Other ideas for outings and events would be welcome especially if you were able to volunteer to assist with the organisation. Not everything needs to be organised by Committee members and it's likely some of you may be aware of possibilities or know of places or events that are not generally accessible to the public.

I hope you continue to enjoy your U3A and look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the coming months.

*Best wishes  
Mary Lennox*

### **THE PROGRAMME**

In September we had a wonderful talk on Lyme's Disease during which Dr Alan Bowman surprised many of us when he said that "Ticks should not be removed by a tick remover or a heated match, as a trauma like this causes them to inject poison into the body of their victim. Instead they should be pulled off gently by hand if at all possible". He also informed us that "if removed fairly quickly, there should be no risk of the tick transmitting Lyme's Disease, as it requires to be in situ for more than twelve hours to do so". Note - these are only approximate quotes.

In October our Speaker was Ellie Graham who gave us an excellent presentation on The Northern Picts. Who knew that their social life was so rich and that their homelife incorporated beautiful objects as well as practical ones?

Many of you know that we have had problems with the audibility of some of our Speakers. We are working hard to address this, and as well as asking our Speakers to use a lapel microphone from now on, we have also decided to reserve a limited number of seats at the front each month for those who are hard of hearing. Please arrive early to take up one of these seats, or email Maggie to request that one be kept for you.

The programme for the rest of the season is in place. The autumn talks are:

- Nov 13th Assisted Dying, Here and There. Professor Sir Graeme Catto, who was the first Chair of the Campaign for Dignity in Dying
- Dec 11th Forvie Nature Reserve - Migration Stations Daryl Short. Reserve Officer for Nature Scot for the past 19 years.

## OUR GROUPS



*The Gardening Group at Birkhall (King Charles' garden) June 25*

Two Groups are inviting new members:

**The General History Group** would like to recruit additional members with an interest in history. We meet monthly on the second Wednesday at 13.30 at the Burnett Arms. Between now and Christmas we will be discussing the following topics:

- 12 Nov: Russia in the 18th century - how Russia evolved from a backwater to become a major European and Eurasian power
- 17 Dec: Coffee - how a drink influenced society and history

Other recent subjects have included the Hanseatic League, the history of holidays, and the French Revolution

Usually, subtopics to the headline subject are presented informally by a member, followed by a general discussion. If our autumn programme appeals, or you are interested in expanding your historical knowledge, why not come along?

**Our Meteorology group** (Meteo for short) meets monthly on the last Wednesday of the month at 2.30pm at the Hill of Banchory Family Centre, Firbrae, Hill of Banchory (adjacent to the primary school). Our interest is in the weather - not just locally - and the climatic influences which drive it. This inevitably drifts into the impact of Global Climate Change on our environment, but we are by no means restricted to that rather major.subject.

We have a couple of spaces free at present so if anyone is interested in the World above our heads, do join us. The two remaining meetings this year are on Wednesday 29th October and Wednesday 26th November, 2.30pm till 4.00.